

ANGUS JOURNAL 2026



THE BEEF BREED | DIE VLEISRAS

ROECHAMA

Veilings:

MALHERBE² Angus & Brangus Veiling

23 September 2026

Plaas Graslaagte, Hertzogville

20 Rooi Angusbulle, 3 Swart Angusbulle & 30 Brangusbulle

20 Vroulike Brangus-stoetdiere

100 Kommersiële diere





ANGUS ALLIANCE VEILING

26 Augustus 2026

Kroon Boma, Kroonstad

30 Bulle

35 Vroulike stoetdiere

Groot Kampioenbul:
Bloemskou 2025

Champion of the World:
Silver 2025

Roechama Leupold, RCM21-64
Semen te koop
Seuns beskikbaar in 2026

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Cover photo:
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RC Malherbe,
Hertzogville

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Ons bedank Pendulum Visual Communication vir hulle professionele samewerking met die uitleg en druk van hierdie joernaal.
Ons kan hulle met vrymoedigheid aanbeveel vir enige ontwerp- en drukdiens.

Pendulum Visual Communication | Tel: 051 448 5832

www.pvconline.co.za | Pres. Steynstraat 38A, Westdene, Bloemfontein



Die Angus Joernaal is die amptelike tydskrif van die Angus Genootskap van SA. Menings wat in hierdie tydskrif gepubliseer word, is egter nie noodwendig dié van die Genootskap nie.

The Angus Journal is the official publication of the Angus Society of SA. However, opinions published in this magazine are not necessarily those of the society

Kopiereg op hierdie publikasie word voorbehou en geen materiaal, artikel of deel van 'n artikel mag gereproduseer word sonder die skriftelike toestemming van die redakteur nie.

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Production Sale
15 Sept 2026
offering
50 bulls

**Table Hill
Dordrecht**

**Carl 073 330 5579
Kevin 083 995 7087
E: carl.miles@hotmail.com**

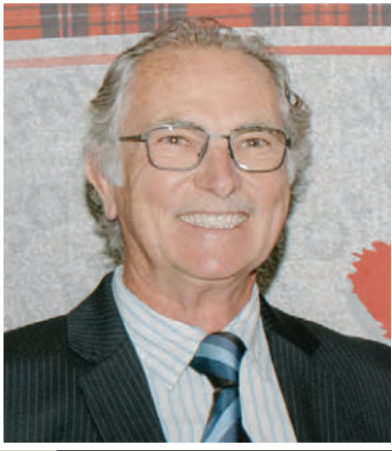
The proof is in the progeny

021 PVC 051 448 5832

2026

Foreword by the Chairman

Woord deur die Voorsitter



Basie Bezuidenhout

Every challenge carries the seed of progress – with perseverance and unity, it becomes our strength.

Ons boere staar daagliks uitdagings soos landswette, politiek, klimaatverandering, hoë insetkoste en die uitbreking van veesiektes in die gesig. Op hierdie hartseer noot het ons 2025 afgesluit en 2026 het ongelukkig op dieselfde negatiewe noot afgeskop. Almal is redelik keelvol vir bek-enklouseer (BKS), vergaderings en die onvermoë van die owerhede om alles wat gepaardgaan met die uitbreking van BKS te hanteer. Die gevolge is onmeetbaar en nie net vir die landbou nie, maar ook vir die ekonomie in geheel. Die invloed van die siekte sal sekerlik in die toekoms 'n rol speel in die arbeid en op politieke terreine. Ons vertrou dat effektiewe entstowwe vinnig by die plase en diere sal uitkom sodat die siekte spoedig onder beheer gebring kan word.

The stud industry has been severely affected by the FMD outbreak. Auctions, agricultural expos, and shows have also been impacted, with some cancelled. The Society has postponed the September National Show in Moorreesburg to ensure the safety of all. The safety of our breeders and stud animals remains our highest priority at all times.

Ten spyte van skoue waar beesafdelings gekanselleer is as gevolg van BKS moet ons poog om die skoue op ander maniere te ondersteun. Hulle bly tog ons vennote. Positiewe punte wat ons kan uitlig, is dat die genootskap hopelik genoegsame reserwes die afgelope paar jare opgebou het om die huidige uitdaging van BKS die hoof te bied. Dit stel ons ook in staat om meer bemerking te doen. Dankie aan ons lede wat op eie stoom ons ras bemark en goeie kwaliteit en aangepaste diere beskikbaar maak vir telers. Baie geluk aan dr. Enslin Coetzee met die nuwe rekordprys vir 'n Angus-bul en geluk aan die koper, mnr. Nico Steyn.

The Angus Society has also made good progress regarding myostatin. Since the 2025 season, all auction bulls have been subject to a negative test. Let us ensure that we protect the breed's characteristic ease of calving and beef quality for our own stud herds as well as for commercial buyers who rely on it. The Angus breed is rightly known as the beef breed with the world's largest gene pool. Our local population also receives a healthy infusion of new genetics each year, mainly from the USA, Canada, and Australia. This genetic diversity is becoming increasingly evident and can be observed in models compiled from genotyping data. SA Stud Book is committed and spends considerable time on genetic evaluation. A word of thanks to Mr. Jason Reding and his team for the way they manage the genotyping and BGP2 projects. Through improved genetic information, stud breeders are empowered to select only the best genetics to improve their herds. Commercial buyers can therefore choose the most suitable animals for maximum meat production. We urge our members to invest in more genotyping of their animals. I would like to thank the Angus council members and personnel for their support and cooperation. Thank you for everyone's input and dedication. A word of thanks to every member of the

Society for their positive attitude, involvement, and support of the staff. The Society is its members, and every individual matters.

Angus Beef bly 'n uitdaging, maar daar word hard agter die skerm gewerk om moontlike suksesse te verseker. Dankie aan die direkteure wat die verantwoordelikheid namens elke lid dra. Ons rig 'n versoek aan lede wat Angus-kalwers slag om asseblief bloktotse te laat doen. Inligting omtrent die nageslag van geregistreerde Angus-bulle op Hereford-, Sussex-, Shorthorn- en Wagyu-koeie wat geslag word, sal ook welkom wees. Hierdie inligting moet asseblief dan só aangedui word en vir verwysingsdoeleindes na die kantoor gestuur word. Dit sal baie waardeer word indien die skandering van die karkasse (waar moontlik) ook gedoen kan word. Hierdeur kan ons die verbruikers oortuig van die besonderse vleiseienskappe van ons ras. Met dié inligting kan ons Stamboek help om die huidige graderingstelsel met 'n klassifikasiestelsel te vervang.

Let us hope and trust that some auctions will indeed take place. As usual, our stud animals are of outstanding quality, and we wish that every breeder achieves success and is satisfied with their results this year. Farmers and breeders must remain positive amid the challenges we face. Let us help one another where we can. Encourage each other and keep our heads held high.

“Die beste tyd om 'n boom te plant, was 20 jaar gelede en die tweede beste tyd is nou.” lui die bekende Chinese gesegde. “Suid Afrika se rooivleisbedryf word al meer in 'n hoek gedryf en toenemend gedwing om te doen wat hy miskien 'n dekade gelede moes gedoen het. So, doen dit net, want nou bly immers die tweede beste tyd om dit te doen.” (Chris Burgess, Landbouweekblad, November 2025.)

All the best for 2026.
Basie Bezuidenhout

Visit our recently launched channel



 /@SAAngus

ANGUS SOCIETY
South Africa



Subscribe, like and share

<https://www.youtube.com/@SAAngus>



Our Breed Advisor

2025 sal onthou word as 'n jaar van betekenisvolle hoogtepunte vir die Angus Genootskap van Suid-Afrika. Dit was 'n jaar waarin ons as organisasie gegroei het in eenheid, visie en momentum. Ons staan vandag op 'n sterk fondament – nie net as 'n genootskap nie, maar as 'n gemeenskap van mense wat glo in kwaliteit, integriteit en vooruitgang.

Soos ons egter die nuwe jaar betree, doen ons dit met nugter realisme.

Bek-en-Klouseer versprei vinnig deur ons land en die realiteit daarvan raak elke produsent, elke gesin en elke onderneming in die rooivleiswaardeketting. Dit plaas druk op markte, bewegings, pryse en vertroue. 2026 kan moontlik een van die moeilikste jare wees wat ons landbougemeenskap in dekades beleef het.

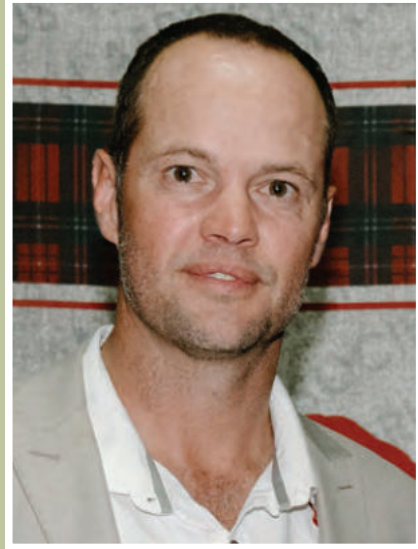
Tog is daar iets wat sterker is as enige krisis. Dit is die gees van die Suid-Afrikaanse boer.

Ons is nie 'n volk wat gaan lê wanneer omstandighede teen ons draai nie. Ons is 'n volk wat planne maak. Wat aanpas. Wat saamstaan. Wat bou – selfs wanneer dit moeilik is. Ons deursettingsvermoë en innovasie het ons al deur droogtes, ekonomiese druk en beleidsuitdagings geneem. Dit sal ons weer deur hierdie tyd neem.

Hierdie jaar gaan van ons vra om nader aan mekaar te beweeg. Om kennis te deel. Om mekaar prakties te ondersteun. Om verantwoordelik en strategies op te tree. Wanneer ons as stoet- en kommersiële telers hande vat, word ons sterker as enige eksterne uitdaging.

Ek glo vas dat daar 'n baie goeie tydperk vir Suid-Afrikaanse beesboere voorlê, wanneer ons deur hierdie fase gewerk het. Die druk wat ons tans ervaar, forseer ons om strukture, stelsels en platforms in plek te sit wat die bedryf op die lang termyn meer professioneel, meer geïntegreerd en meer mededingend sal maak.

Die Angus Genootskap
staan onwrikbaar
agter elkeen
van ons



Danie Dames

telers. Ons is hier om te ondersteun, om leiding te bied en om saam oplossings te vind. Ons nooi elke teler uit om met ons in gesprek te bly, om betrokke te raak en om saam met ons die pad vorentoe te stap.

Want uiteindelik gaan dit nie net oor uitdagings nie. Dit gaan oor wie ons is en wie ons saam kan wees.

2026 gaan moed vra, maar dit
gaan ook geleenthede
bring en saam
sal ons dit
aankpak



30th VJ
Production Sale

9 Sept 2026
at 12pm.

Chris and Sally Purdon | Glenfinlas Farm | Cathcart 5310 | 082 879 2744

Note by the Editor



Pulling in One Direction

On a long stretch of road, a group of travellers set out toward the same destination. Each had their own pace, their own burdens, and their own ideas about the journey. At first, everyone walked as they pleased. Some rushed ahead, others lagged behind, and a few stopped often to adjust their load. Progress was slow, and frustration grew.

Eventually, they reached a narrow pass where the road could only be crossed together. They paused, spoke honestly, and agreed on a shared direction and rhythm. The stronger helped carry the heavier loads, the quicker walkers slowed their pace, and those with experience guided the way. No one moved ahead alone, and no one was left behind.

From that moment, the journey changed. The road did not become easier, but progress became steady. Obstacles that once felt overwhelming were crossed more quickly, simply because everyone was pulling in the same direction.



Linette Cloete

When they finally reached their destination, they realised something important: **success was not achieved by individual strength, but by shared purpose.** Working together did not just shorten the journey — it made the journey worthwhile.

Baie dankie aan die adverteerders vir hul deelname aan die 2026 Angus Journaal.

Hartlike dank aan ieder en elk vir fotos en bydraes – dit word opreg waardeer. U fotos en bydraes maak nie alleen die publikasie moontlik nie, maar verleen die nodige “local flavour”.





Meet the family behind Guldenvrug



Guldenvrug Angus is a family business where we aspire to breed and grow exceptional cattle and quality beef products.

Situated just outside Pretoria, the farm is proudly run by Nico Steyn, his wife Natasha, and their children Zac, Sascha & Ross.

Part of an ever-changing and environmentally aware society, Guldenvrug is integrating the entire value chain to ensure product consistency and sustainability.

We believe in an integrated business model that brings the value of the Angus breed to both associated breeders and beef consumers, building the brand of this premier beef.

We are privileged and excited to be part of the future of Angus in South Africa.



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ANGUS Raad | Council 2025/2026



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and Southern Cape



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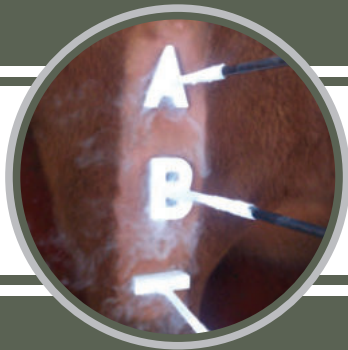
Douglas Fletcher
Council member: KZN



Ruben Redelinghuys
Council member:
Gauteng & Mpumalanga



Kevin Miles
Additional Council
member



MALUTI ANGUS

4de Produksieveiling: Saterdag 6 Junie 2026 om 12:00

Op die plaas Montaubon
tussen Clarens en Kestell.

Aanbod : 30 bulle & 30 vroulike diere



**BIOSEKURITEIT
VIR BEK EN KLOUSEER
SAL TOEGEPAS WORD.**



Interkalfperiode vir die kudde

- 2024/25 = 362 dae
- 2023/24 = 360 dae
- 2022/23 = 357 dae
- 2021/22 = 357 dae
- 2020/21 = 355 dae
- 2019/20 = 355 dae
- 2018/19 = 358 dae
- 2017/18 = 363 dae
- 2016/17 = 371 dae
- 2015/16 = 368 dae



André Breytenbach
082 774 6804

andre@maluti-angus.co.za
Bethlehem

AN HOMAGE TO OUR OLDEST STILL-ACTIVE ANGUS STUD.

ONE OAK

Angus Stud

Owner: P.J. (Peter) Bennett • P.O. Box 65, Adelaide, 5760
Colin 076 250 3802 • E: pbennett@bosberg.co.za
(Black Angus)

The Bennett family, while farming on One Oak, has been associated with Aberdeen-Angus since the purchase of an Aberdeen Angus bull from the late Pat Mossop, namely Torburnlea Eclipse, born on 15th October 1935 arriving as a two year old. On 29.12.1940 a further two bulls were purchased from LB Southey of Steynsburg, while on the 17th March 1942 (Vol V) registered females, 18 in number, were acquired from the Lenton's stud of Mr Southey. These cows eventually constituted the base for a commercial herd.

Owing to the loss of one of the Bennett Bros in WWII and an entailed farm the pedigree herd was crossed with a Friesland bull. This herd is still in existence today, although not pure Angus as selective crisscrossing with *Bos Indicus* bulls has been practiced. In early 1960 my father Colin purchased registered cows from the stud herds of Petersburg, Baldinnie, Flam and Hetloo.

The first calf registered with the One Oak prefix was One Oak Charming, born on 13.06.1960.

Further purchases from herds and dispersal sales were from Torburnlea, Fyvie, Grenfeld, Bold Point and more recently from Epworth.

My nephew Colin has now joined me and manages the pedigree herd of approximately 165 matable cows. It is intended to extend this number to 300 in the near future. The cows run on virulent redwater, heartwater and gallsickness veld for the duration of the winter. The carrying capacity of the sweet valley bushveld is 6ha/lsu at an altitude of $\pm 2\ 000'$ asl. In summer the cattle and their progeny run on sour grassveld at an altitude of $\pm 5\ 500'$ asl, supplemented with a phosphate salt lick.

In the late 60's and early 70's breeders and the Society took the courageous decision to breed away from the smallish and showy type of breeding cow.

The One Oak herd used limited semen numbers from the USA and New Zealand. A bull was imported from New Zealand in 1982 and together with the use of semen produced the desired results.



P.J. Bennett with his Champion

Potential stud progeny from these importations were then mated back on to the family cow lines. This form of line breeding and environmental input led to the establishment of a generally medium type of cow (550kg) that resembles the New Zealand type of Angus with short but wide muzzles. Of most importance was the adaptability of this type to my veld conditions.

In the past the One Oak herd was represented at the local and national shows with success.

The more memorable achievements were the lifting of the trophy for Champion cow at the Rand Easter Show and the trophy for the Inter-breed Champion Performance tested class at the Pretoria show.

In the early 80's it became apparent that several of my cows of the Maivelia family purchased in 1960 were the carriers of the red recessive gene.

Pedigrees have always been of importance, interest and a selection tool.

I have the herd books and records as far back as 1906 for South African pedigrees and a set of the Scottish herd books.

Finally I have had the privilege of representing our Society at Angus forums. I have had the opportunity of serving in office on behalf of the breeders.

I cherish the fact that I may have played a small part of the 100 years' existence of the Angus Society. ♦



Aberdeen Angus Council 1981-1982

Seated: AP De Kock, J Fowler, PJ Bennett (President),
PJ Du Plessis (Manager), WH Barnard.

2nd Row: AW Simpson, MB Crookes, J Aucamp, J Muller, HW James.

3rd Row: C Pope, J Campher, Dr JJ Geldenhuys.

Genomics in Action for Angus breeders

Jason Reding, Hannah Kruger and Marike Hillocks

The South African Angus breeders have taken full advantage of the second round of the Beef Genomics Program (BGP2). From the very first year of BGP2, the breed has set the pace by exceeding their allotted genotyping quota by over 300 animals and achieving an impressive 161% compliance rate. The momentum has continued into year two, with the breed on course to reach their allotted quota. This has allowed the breed to grow their genomic reference population to over 1 300 animals. Several herds from breeds registered with SA Stud Book have adopted genomic testing as an essential breeding and management tool. This level of adoption reflects a clear understanding of the long-term value of genomics, allowing the breeders to reap the full benefit of the latest technology.

Polledness

The two POLLED mutations that can be tested for genomically, are the Celtic (Pc) and Friesian (Pf) variants. The more recently discovered Mongolian (P_M) and Guarani (P_G) mutations, which also cause polledness, are being investigated by the SA Stud Book team to be provided via a genomic test soon. Genomic testing for both the Celtic and the Friesian POLLED variants has revealed that the Celtic POLLED variant is the only variant segregating in over 98% of the South African Angus population.

Double Muscling

E226X is the new double-muscling variant that has been found in the South African beef cattle population. Although described as Beef Shorthorn specific, lessons learnt with the “Belgian Blue double-muscling” variant *nt821*, these mutations can sporadically occur in other breeds. Less than 4% of the total SA Angus population tests as a carrier, with the *nt821* variant having been identified as the primary variant segregating within the SA Angus population (Figure 1). In the cases where an animal is a carrier, of either *nt821*, *Q204X* or *F94L*, it has been traced back to cows brought in as Section A for upgrading purposes. This highlights a need to screen these animals to reveal their double-muscling status prior to considering them, with the added benefit of genomically enhanced breeding values assisting the prediction of their breeding potential.

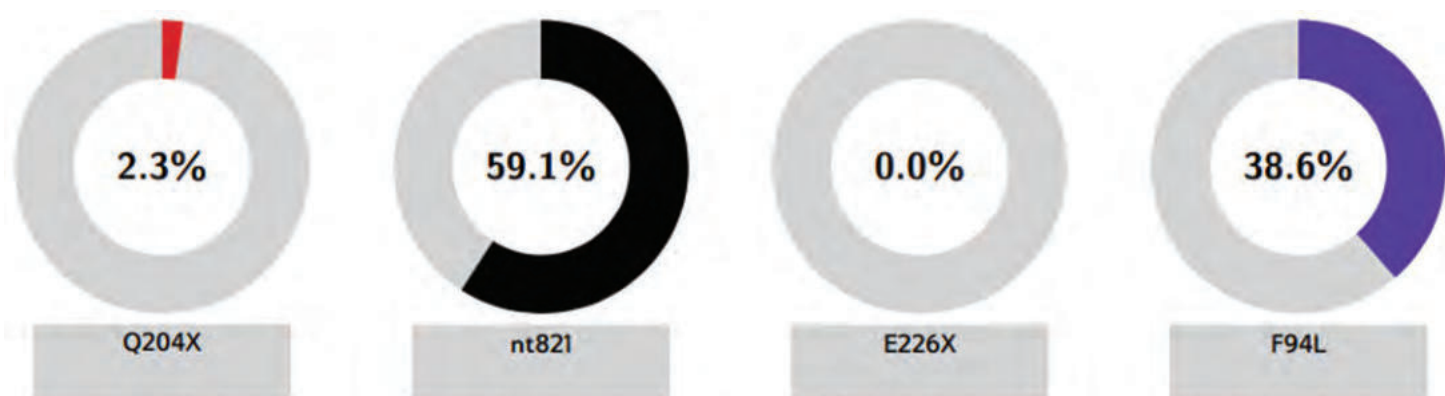


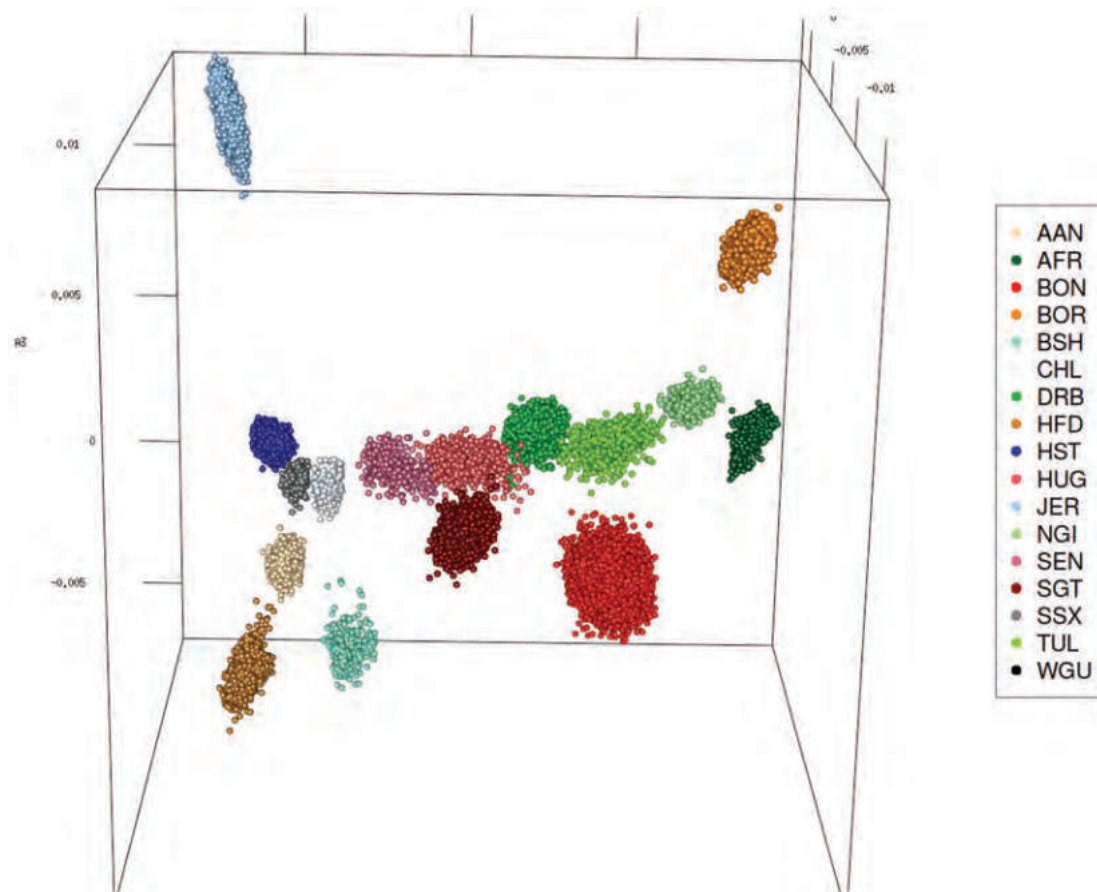
Figure 1. Double muscling gene variants found within the South African Angus population.

Detrimental Recessive Mutations

Genetic disorders such as Crooked Tail, Osteopetrosis, and Mule Foot cause distinctive phenotypic abnormalities, often mistaken for general weakness or poor health in calves. **Glycogen Storage Diseases (GSD)**, including Pompe's disease, resulting from mutations that impair glycogen storage, is a mutation that is currently being monitored to eradicate this recessive mutation from the South African beef cattle population. **Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP1)** is an ocular disorder that causes complete blindness in animals, but is only exhibited in animals over four years of age, meaning it is a progressive degeneration of the photoreceptors. **Maple Syrup Urine Disease (MSUD)** is a lethal genetic abnormality, with two variants observed within the South African beef cattle population. Affected calves are unable to break down complex amino acids due to a defective enzyme. The build-up of these complex amino acids causes lethal brain damage, affected calves are typically born without symptoms, but by 2 to 4 days old become slow, dull and eventually recumbent. The calf will often throw its head back and lie on its side, unable to rise. To reduce the risk of these disorders, genomic testing of sire bulls is essential to exclude carriers and ensure herd health. **Developmental Duplication (DD)** is a recessive mutation found in the *NHLRC2* gene, which plays a critical role in embryonic development. Calves affected by DD are observed to have extra limbs or limb parts on the calf, commonly in the shoulder or neck region, alongside spinal deformities (such as the spine splitting or duplicating) and cranial defects. This disorder is often lethal, resulting in abortions with calves rarely surviving. **Neuropathic Hydrocephalus (NH)**, also known as curly calf syndrome, is a lethal recessive mutation where affected calves display fixated joints, their skulls are dome-shaped, malformed, and have loose bone plates. **Bovine Progressive Ataxia (BPA)** is a neurodegenerative disease caused by a recessive mutation in the *KIF1C* gene, that affects the myelin formation protecting the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. Symptoms typically appear between 6 – 18 months. Clinical signs of BPA include a stiff gait, progressive in-coordination of the hind limbs, inability to rise, and muscle tremors. SA Angus breeders are hereby asked that if a calf seemingly exhibits one of the above mentioned recessive disorders, that a hair sample of the calf is taken in order to confirm if it is indeed a recessive genetic disorder.

Genomic Positioning of the Breed

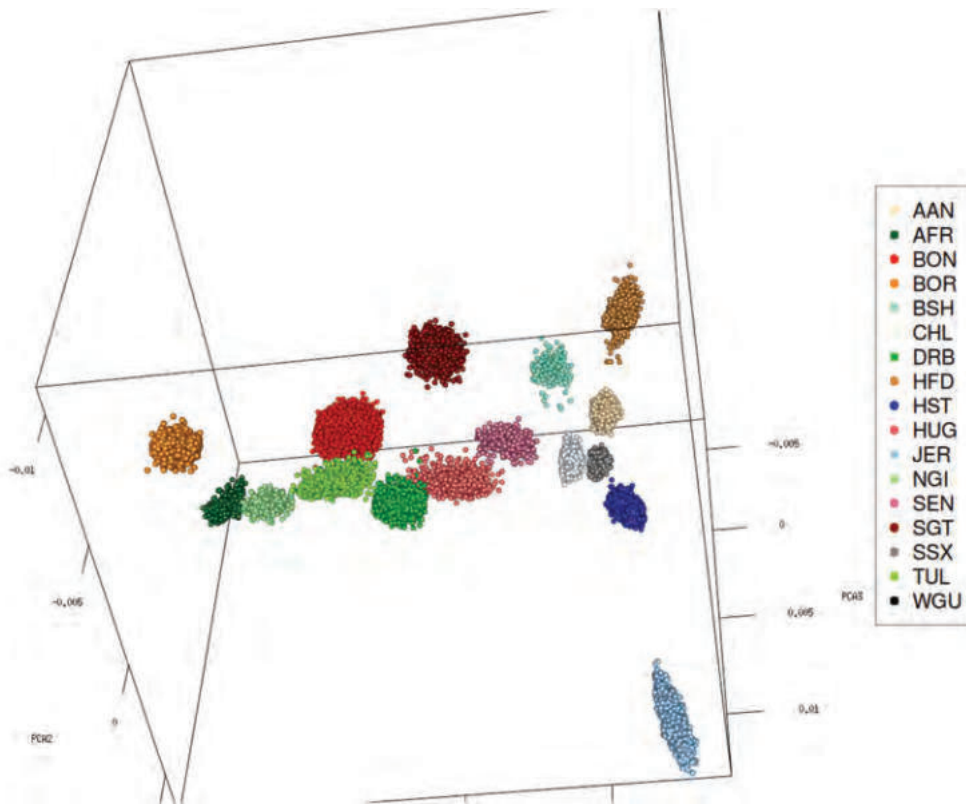
The (3-dimensional) Principal Component Analysis (PCA) plot (Figures 2 and 3), simply referred to as a “GeneBox”, illustrates the genetic relationship of the South African Angus breed relative to other South African breeds. Each dot represents an individual animal, and clustering reflects shared genetic similarity across thousands of genomic markers. Two GeneBoxes have been included from different angles to encapsulate the three-dimensional aspect of the plot. The SA Angus cluster (light pink cluster in the



bottom left of the first picture, and top right in the second picture) forms a distinct, well-defined cluster with clear separation from the other breeds. The SA Angus cluster sits between the other *Taurine* breeds, the Beef Shorthorn cluster (light blue cluster at the bottom of the first image and on the right-hand side on the second image), the Hereford cluster (light brown), the Sussex (grey) and the Charolais (white). These breeds are of British - or European ancestry and therefore cluster in similar areas. As more genotypes for each breed are added and the genetic reference populations per breed are expanded, the genomic relationships between the clusters will become even more apparent.

Figure 2. GeneBox to show the SA Angus genetic relatedness to other breeds, Angle 1.

The integration of genomic testing into the breed provides an increasingly powerful framework for managing the SA Angus breed. The GeneBox highlights the breeds' distinct yet composite genomic architecture. At the same time, the detection and management of detrimental mutations remain critical to safeguard the long-term fitness of the population.



These latest “Geneboxes” are a part of the ongoing development of the Breed Composition Purity Key. SA Stud Book will launch the newest Breed Key in 2026, introducing this as an added feature when genomically testing animals, and will allow for accurate tracing of upgrading, as well as identifying the breed history in contributing to a composite or admixed animal.

The future of the SA Angus breed will not be shaped by chance, but by informed selection. By embracing genomic technology today, Angus breeders secure stronger herds, greater profitability, and a legacy of performance that will stand the test of time.

Figure 3. GeneBox to show the SA Angus position in relation to other breeds, Angle 2.



Photo: Anton Vermaak



*And
nothing
else*

**In proud
partnership
with:**



WOOLWORTHS

An additional quality system for Red Meat in South Africa:

Professor PE Strydom

Agriculture Research Council - Animal Production Institute, Private Bag X2, IRENE, 0062. South Africa
Department of Animal Sciences, Stellenbosch University, P Bag X1 Matieland, 7602. South Africa

The principles of a classification system?

South Africa uses a carcass classification system as opposed to other countries, such as Australia and the USA, that use a grading system to describe carcasses in terms of yield and/or expected eating quality. A classification system describes a product but does not rank the product in terms of certain parameters. A grading system will therefore inform the buyer or consumer whether the expected eating quality of one product will be better than that of the other. The reasoning behind a classification system is that by merely describing the product, the buyer or consumer may choose which characteristics and specifications of these suits his purposes. Even if that is the case, we should expect a classification system to provide accurate descriptors of those characteristics relevant to the end-user. While surveys of the South Africa meat consumer are clear that the average consumer has very little knowledge of the carcass classification system in relation to expected quality of the product, it is nevertheless important that the retailer who is expected to know the system is able to provide sufficient information to end-users so that they can purchase with confidence.

Our classification is based mainly on two components:

1. The amount of fat on the carcass (together with conformation score) provides a guideline of how much edible meat can be expected to cut from the carcass. At certain levels (too much or too little) fat may also have an effect on eating quality
2. The age of the animal, where an increase in age implies more heat-resistant connective tissue in muscles and therefore an expected decrease in eating quality, or more specifically tenderness.



Is eating quality only affected by age of the animal?

Meat eating quality describes the combined experience of tenderness, flavour and juiciness. Tenderness is often regarded as the more important attribute of the three, although tenderness alone can never satisfy the consumer. Without going into too much detail, depending on the type of muscle, three characteristics or conditions of muscle determine meat tenderness:

- The amount and heat stability of connective tissue – connective tissue is the basic background structure of muscle/meat
- The degree of contraction of muscle when muscle has changed to meat (rigor mortis -12 hours post mortem)
- The ability of the muscle/meat to age or tenderise when stored of any amount of time
- The three components are involved simultaneously in meat tenderness, and to a lesser effect on other quality parameters too, and is muscle dependent, i.e. in certain muscle the one factor may play a more prominent role than the others



Many factors and processes before during and after slaughter impact on the three components to affect final eating quality of beef and these processes are most of the time linked and dependent on one another. To name a few: genetics, nutrition, growth enhancers, growth rate, pre-slaughter stress, chilling combined with the rate of conversion of muscle to meat, time and conditions of post mortem aging and ultimately the cooking process can influence eating quality.

Why was the classification system based only on the age of the animal to describe eating quality?

The general motivation to use age as a descriptor for eating quality, particularly tenderness, was very valid at the time when the classification system was implemented. The classification system was developed and applied in a highly regulated industry and was designed for specific existing conditions at that time. Various policies, such as the distinction between controlled and uncontrolled areas, compulsory levies payable by producers, restrictions on the establishment of abattoirs, the compulsory auctioning of carcasses according to grade and mass in controlled areas, the supply control via permits and quotas, the setting of floor prices, removal scheme, etc., characterised the red meat industry before deregulation commenced in the early 1990's. Production systems (e.g. feedlots: diet, growth enhancers, feeding duration) were fairly standardised and about 60% of all carcasses slaughtered were of the A age class (young animal without permanent incisors), probably originating from feedlots. In addition, due to controlled and uncontrolled areas, more than 60% of cattle were slaughtered in state owned abattoirs (Abattoir Corporation; ABAKOR) in regulated areas under standardised pre-slaughter, slaughter and post-slaughter conditions. It is safe to say that sources of variation in quality of beef would have been limited, at least in comparison to current conditions. Since the deregulation of the agricultural marketing dispensation in 1997, many changes have occurred in all sectors of the industry. Today feedlots produce more than 80% of beef in the formal sector. Many feedlots converted to vertically integrated systems consisting of back grounding units, feedlots, abattoirs and processing plants and some even branched out into retailing their own branded product. It is estimated that 60% - 80% of animals going through feedlots are further processed in vertically integrated operations. Larger abattoirs (Class A and B; 50 to 100+ carcasses per day) still provide 60% of all carcasses, but now their operations are controlled individually. Likewise, many smaller abattoirs also exist, each with their own operational procedures and facilities such as pre-slaughter handling of cattle, electrical stimulation and chilling. Many changes have also occurred in the production of animals that could affect the final quality of the product. The use of different anabolic implant regimes often combined (or not) with the use of a beta agonist, such as salbutamol, zilpaterol or ractopamine could affect the type of slaughter animal, its response to the slaughter process and conversion of muscle to meat and ultimately the final quality, tremendously. To summarise, an animal can follow various paths along the value chain where different factors interact collectively and interactively on the final quality, much more so than in the days of a regulated system. The possible effects of these factors on final quality is nowhere described in the current system except for the description of age.



Sources of variation in quality of South African beef according to case studies

While age by dentition is the only quality related criterion in the SA classification system, sufficient evidence exists to show that factors other than age (extrinsic or intrinsic) may have an effect on tenderness under the current production and processing conditions in South Africa. These factors may even overshadow the effect of age depending on the type of muscle and include various pre-slaughter, slaughter and post-slaughter conditions and procedures. We discuss only a few of them by showing results of case studies.

What happens before slaughter?

In two recent studies, effects of age and production system (including nutrition) on tenderness were investigated. Loin steaks of carcasses of grain-fed animals with either 0 (Class A) or 1 to 2 (Class AB) incisors were more tender (higher sensory panel scores indicate more tender meat) than loin steaks of carcasses from grass-fed animals classified according to incisors from 0 to 6 or A-, AB- and B-age classes (Figure 1). Note that no beta agonists were used in these trials (zilpaterol, etc). Among the grass-fed animal groups, animals with no permanent incisors (A-class) produced tougher steaks than animals with 3 to 6 incisors (B-class) and animals with 3 to 6 incisors had numerically better tenderness scores than younger grass-fed animals with 1 to 2 incisors (AB-class). The poor performance of the very young grass-fed animals (A-class) could be related to poorly conditioned small carcasses, reflecting poor growth rate (or at least periods of poor growth) which were chilled more rapidly and therefore were prone to cold shortening and toughening of the loin muscle. Although the current volumes for A-class grass-fed animals and AB-class in



general (grass-fed and grain fed; 4% market share) are very low compared to A-class grain fed animals, the results from the present study are important, as they indicate that feeding regime may have an effect on meat quality within the same age class.

Hormonal growth promotants (HGP) or ear implants are widely used in the feedlot industry that represents the largest portion of carcasses produced in the South African market. Studies have shown variable effects on tenderness and eating quality, but a negative effect was confirmed especially with repeated applications, combination of substances and aggressiveness of substances. Implant scenarios may vary among different feeders, yet their carcasses are classed under the same system.

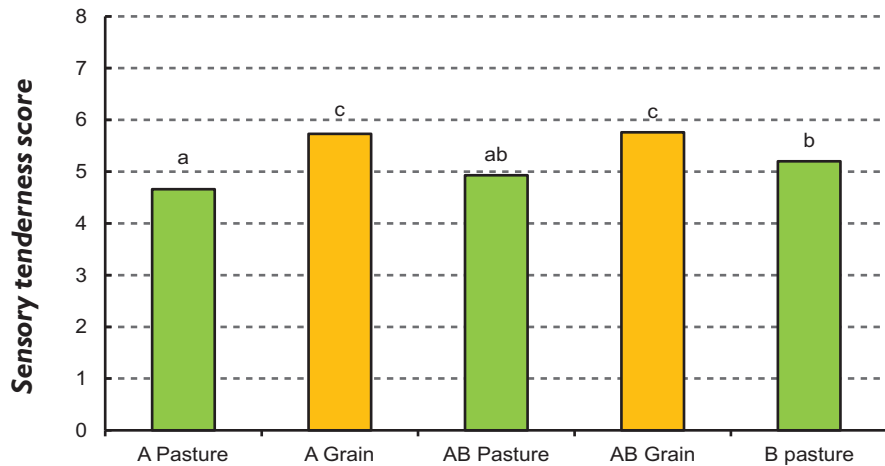


Figure 1 The effect of age class (by dentition) and production system on sensory tenderness scores of loin muscle.

A = 0 incisors;

AB = 1 – 2 permanent incisors;

B = 3 – 6 permanent incisors.

^{a,b,c} Bars with different letters mean the differences in tenderness were significant ($P < 0.05$) and will likely be picked up by consumers.

Sensory tenderness:

1 – extremely tough;

8 – extremely tender.

Judged by the magnitude of their effects, the use of beta agonists (always in combination with HGPs) that were only introduced in the late 1990s to early 2000s, has a more significant effect on eating quality (tenderness specifically) and while proper management of the slaughter process (converting muscle to meat by correct electrical stimulation and chilling for example, as well as extended post mortem ageing overcome most HGPs' effect, this is not achieved with beta agonists. As beta agonists (zilpaterol, salbutamol, ractopamine) are used in feedlots only, they are most likely to cause increased variation in quality within the A-age class. The effects of different beta agonist products on quality are also not the same. Considering the use of beta agonists under the current classification system, a recent study could not find significant differences in sensory tenderness of steaks of A-age grain-fed animals supplemented with zilpaterol (a beta agonist) and steaks of AB- and B-age grass-fed cattle when samples were aged for three days (Compare this with Figure 1 where no zilpaterol was used). The latter aging scenario is relevant as supermarkets often sell steaks without proper aging (see the first bars of Figure 2). We can see that steaks from non-zilpaterol animals were more tender than those of all other age groups (AB and B) therefore following the scenario expected of the classification system. When the steaks were aged for 14 days (second bars of each treatment) as often happens in better butcheries or retail shops, zilpaterol steaks improved more in sensory score than steaks of older grass-fed AB- and B-age carcasses, but were still not significantly more tender than AB-age steaks and slightly less tender than non-zilpaterol A-age steaks. Interestingly when we look at a different muscle that is higher in connective tissue, other results are found – such muscles are more affected by animal age because connective tissue becomes more heat stable and therefore tougher with age. According to Figure 3, the effect of zilpaterol was not significant in the high connective tissue silverside square muscle (biceps femoris), and the expected differences between age groups as expected from the age classification was significant. Beta agonists increase the enzyme calpastatin activity which work against the enzyme responsible for muscle tenderisation, calpain, causing tougher loin cuts in the initial and also often in the final stages of ageing.

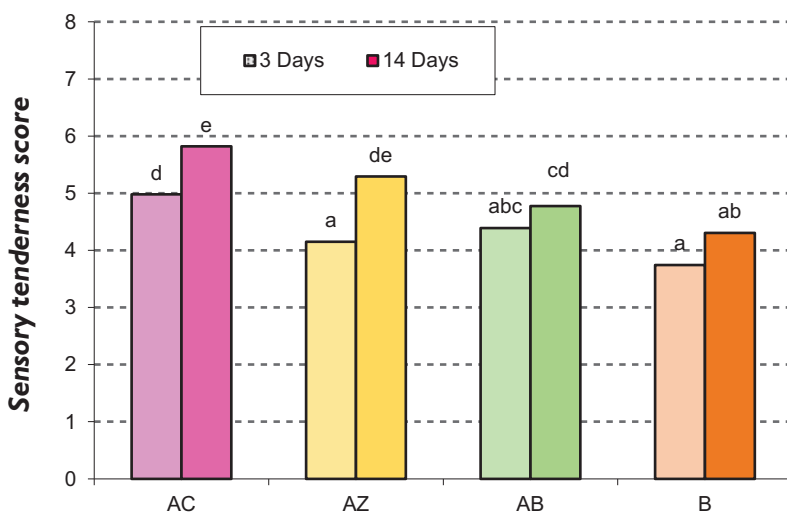


Figure 2 Sensory tenderness values of loin (longissimus lumborum) from 4 age/treatment groups at 3- and 14-days post mortem.

^{a,b,c} Bars with different superscripts differ significantly ($P < 0.05$).

Sensory tenderness:

1 – extremely tough;

8 – extremely tender.

AC = A-age with no zilpaterol treatment, grain fed;

AZ = A-age with zilpaterol treatment, grain fed;

AB = AB-age, pasture reared; B = B-age, grass-fed).



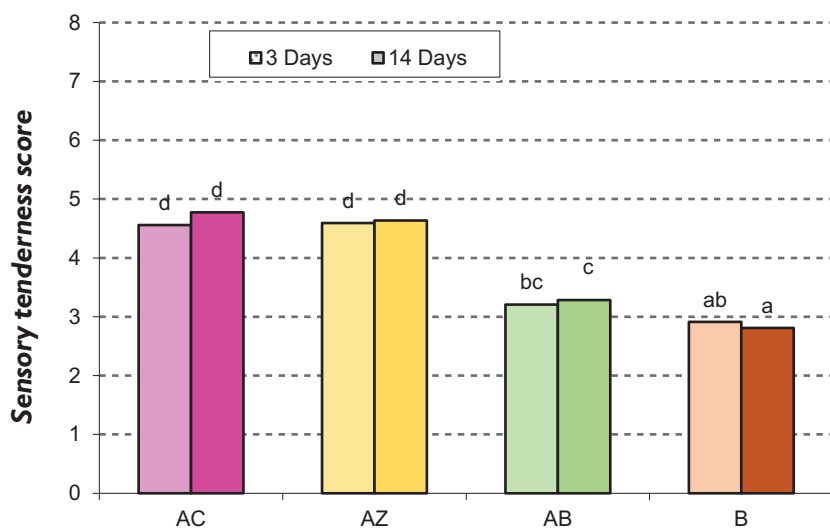


Figure 3 Sensory tenderness values of (silverside square muscle (*m. biceps femoris*) from four age/treatment groups at 3- and 14-days post mortem.

^{a, b, c} Bars with different superscripts differ significantly ($P < 0.05$).

Sensory tenderness:

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AB = AB-age, grass-fed;

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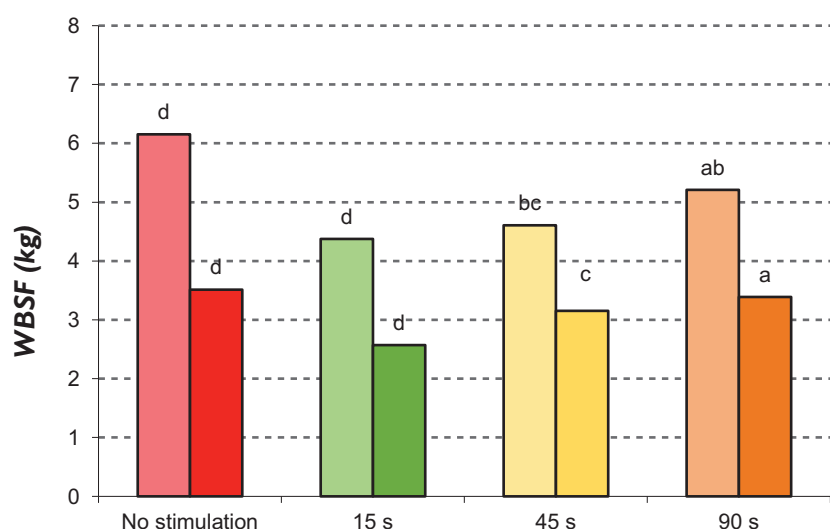


Figure 4 Interaction between electrical stimulation treatment and post mortem aging for Warner-Bratzler shear force (WBSF) of loin (*longissimus lumborum*).

(No electrical stimulation was applied or low voltage electrical stimulation was applied for 15 s, 45 s and 90 s, respectively. Samples were aged for 29 first bar) or 14 days (second bar) post mortem.

^{a, b, c, d} Bars with different superscripts differ significantly ($P < 0.05$).

What happens during and after slaughter?

When the variation in processes before, during and after slaughter is considered the problem becomes more complex. Electrical stimulation (ES) is a technique applied in abattoirs whereby an electric current of a specific nature (specifications: mostly low amperage, medium or high volts, low frequency) is sent through the carcass after exsanguination or even after dressing. This current causes the muscle to contract and relax at high frequency, thereby converting muscle energy to lactic acid, called glycolysis. Glycolysis is the normal process taking place to turn muscle into meat, but for various technical reasons, advancing this process under controlled conditions have benefits in terms of tenderness and tenderness development. The effective use of electrical stimulation is critical and should always be managed in conjunction with the chilling of the carcass during the conversion of muscle (zero hour) to meat 12 hours after killing). This is a concept that many abattoir managers do not understand. Referring back to the state-owned abattoirs of two decades ago, the slaughter process (including stimulation) was standardised, while today various scenarios (no stimulation, ineffective stimulation, over stimulation) may occur due to a highly deregulated abattoir industry. Most studies show that no ES will produce less tender loin steaks when compared to any stimulation treatment, in particular when meat is not aged for long durations (Figure 4). However, 'over stimulation' (duration of 90 seconds or even 45 seconds) may also have detrimental effects, especially on heavy and fat carcasses, typical of the standard carcass produced today. Figure 4 shows that lower values for mechanical measurement of tenderness (Note: Warner Bratzler shear force, lower values in kg, means more tender meat) were found when carcasses were stimulated for 15 second rather than 45 or 60 seconds. The negative effects of over stimulation and no stimulation were more evident with shorter ageing times (Figure 4: first bars for each treatment), conditions that occur commonly in the South African industry. It should be noted that it is not the specific duration of stimulation that is critical for best quality but rather the rigor (muscle to meat process) conditions created by a particular stimulation and chilling regime. When conversion of muscle to meat is too rapid, excessive protein denaturation takes place leading to poor colour and high drip loss but more important to meat that does not age well.



In South African abattoirs neither chilling, nor electrical stimulation is regulated or standardised which can contribute to variability in product quality that cannot be described by the classification process based only on age.

The results

We have only touched on some of the factors involved in the development of eating quality, more specifically tenderness of a beef steak or other cuts and tried to demonstrate that the processes involved are intricate and interactive. Many other factors are also involved such as genetics, pre-slaughter stress, and others that also interact in a specific manner with the factors discussed above.

What could be expected when so much variation in input factors exists? According to a recent beef quality survey (Figure 5) meat tenderness, singled out as one of the important eating quality parameters (the other is juiciness and flavour), is extremely inconsistent. When considering that Warner Bratzler shear values of less than 3.9 kg should give a good quality steak for restaurant purposes and values less than 4.6 kg can be considered as “good for everyday use”, it is clear that the chances of purchasing a good quality or average quality steak is less than 50% on average in our trial. What is not revealed in this graph is that in most cases products with high shear values (tough) also showed the most variability (note that we sampled 20 times over a 6 month period for each shop and each product), so that it may happen that the consumer will buy a good steak from shop A on Monday, but get a very poor one when returning with high hopes on a Friday. It was also clear that price does not directly relate to tenderness and that the only reasonable assurance a consumer may find is to buy certain **brand-named products**, where the brand specifications are such that most factors involved in variation in eating quality are addressed and attempts are made to have them properly audited. Most of the products on the far-right hand side of the graph fall into this category. The important message from this graph is that all but one of the 21 products came from grain fed A-age carcasses

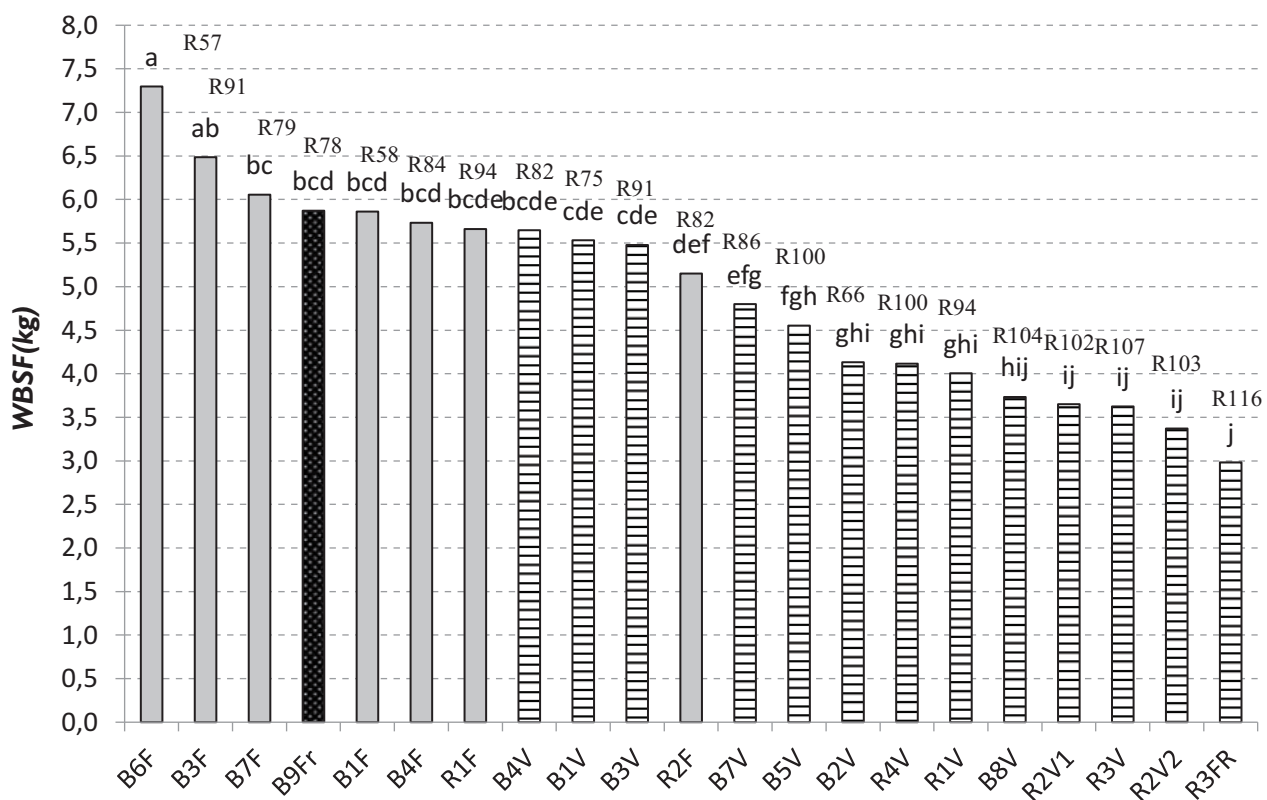


Figure 5 Ranking of mean Warner Bratzler shear force values and price per kg (2012) of 21 porterhouse steak products purchased on 20 different occasions from 14 outlets

(Outlets were either butchers (B) or large retail outlets (R); “V” indicates vacuum packaged and “F” describe steaks displayed on Styrofoam trays overwrapped with PVC film or displayed open in trays behind the counter; “FR” represents “Free Range” and “Fr” represents frozen product; Numbers that are the same, means the samples were from the same outlet but different product line. Price per kg is in ZAR; ^{a,b,c,d} Bars with different superscripts differ significantly, $P < 0.05$)



Take home message

It is probably safe to conclude that the South African classification system at present distinguishes between feedlot animals (mostly A-age, with 1% - 2% AB-age animals and very few A-age pasture animals), younger pasture animals (AB-age), older pasture animals (B-age) and cull animals (C-age). It is evident that the sources of variation in tenderness (as one quality measurement) are much broader than can be described by age alone, in particular within the A-age grain fed product (Figure 5). Although the general definition of classification is that it only **describes** according to certain measurements or scores and does not **rank** carcasses according to quality and price, the probability of experiencing a 'bad steak' (specifically referring to low connective tissue cuts) in the A-class (feedlot) has increased since the implementation of the current South African classification system.



Turning to brand names for quality may prove to be the best option at the moment. However, although such an approach normally leads to improvement in consistency of quality especially when ageing is extended, these systems have their own flaws as most of them follows a “pathway approach”. A pathway approach means that certain processes, individually expected to improve quality as described above are lined up and ticked off in audits to pass or fail a product or process. The main reason why a **“pathway approach”** fails is that the different factors and processes involved in quality interact in a unique way to affect the final eating quality of meat. For example, electrical stimulation is critical in improvement of eating quality. However, overstimulating larger carcasses that chills slower than smaller carcasses can be just as detrimental, or more detrimental to various quality parameters than no electrical stimulation. Most often the detail of each factor and its involvement relative to other factors are not audited or recognised. With pathway system it may also happen that products are disqualified simply because they failed one specification. As an example, breed effect, such as Brahman, may be a criterion in such a system. However, the negative effect of breed or genetics may be overcome if the processes such as correct feeding and slaughter processes are properly managed. A much better approach is a modelling approach where every single combination of possible factors from the genetics through the feeding and slaughtering up to the point of carcass processing into different muscles are considered in a regression model and tested against the response of a consumer panel. In this way, a reliable quality mark can be provided to the consumer for a specific product. Such a system is obviously then a grading system and not a classification system. While the outcomes of such a system may seem very attractive, the development of such a system is not as simple as the current classification system. Even when systems from other countries like the USA and Australia are adopted, many adjustments will need to be made to fit typical South African conditions. In addition, it has to be considered if the cost and complexity of such a system will fit all types of operations in South Africa, meaning will smaller operations be able to afford such a system and will independent bodies be able to run such a system effectively? Will the benefits of such a system outweigh the costs and efforts? Is a consistently good quality steak worth the effort or do we leave the consumer with a shot gun approach when they shop for Saturday afternoon braais?





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Separating the wheat from the chaff

Facts, myths and perceptions in Animal Breeding

Japie van der Westhuizen

One of the most successful programs on TV was “Myth Busters”. It dealt with things people see or believed in, truth of fiction. In many cases, perceptions of what is real and what is urban legends.

Over the years, animal breeding and related aspects were always, and still are also subject to different belief systems and sometimes myths. Some still see it as a special gift to be able to select the right animals and others realise the science it is built on. The rapid development of predicting the true genetic merit of candidate selection material has opened new perspectives for several aspects related to breeding and genetics.

Who has ever heard of Telegony? This is the belief that, as Wikipedia puts it: “offspring can inherit the characteristics of a previous mate of the female parent; thus, the child of a widowed or remarried woman might partake of traits of a previous husband”. The old belief of Maternal impression where “an emotional stimulus experienced by a pregnant woman (or animal) could influence the development of the foetus” has, however come under the spotlight with the theoretical and subsequent experimental work related to epigenetics, and it's influence on the expression of genes (even over generations).

Although some myths might sound ridiculous to most breeders of livestock, some phrases or concepts are sometimes still misunderstood or

even misused in the breeding industry. Some are touched on.

Statement 1: “Natural selection is where you select animals in a natural environment.”

Although many definitions of Darwin's original observations and description exist, one appropriate definition can be as follows: *“The process by which organisms that are better suited to their environment than others produce more offspring. As a result of natural selection, the proportion of organisms in a species with characteristics that are adaptive to a given environment increases with each generation. Therefore, natural selection modifies the originally random variation of genetic traits in a species so that alleles that are beneficial for survival predominate, while alleles that are not beneficial decrease.”* (The American Heritage® Science Dictionary. Houghton Mifflin Company. <Dictionary.com <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/natural-selection>>.)

In short, this means, animals possessing the alleles (forms) of the genes best suited to specific conditions will be favoured to produce more offspring (that will survive). Many times, in animal breeding, the term natural selection is wrongly used to reflect the “natural conditions” where farm animals are supposedly being kept under to bring the “best” animals forward. In truth, any conditions, “natural” or “artificial” will be the source of natural selection. Where livestock producers “change” the

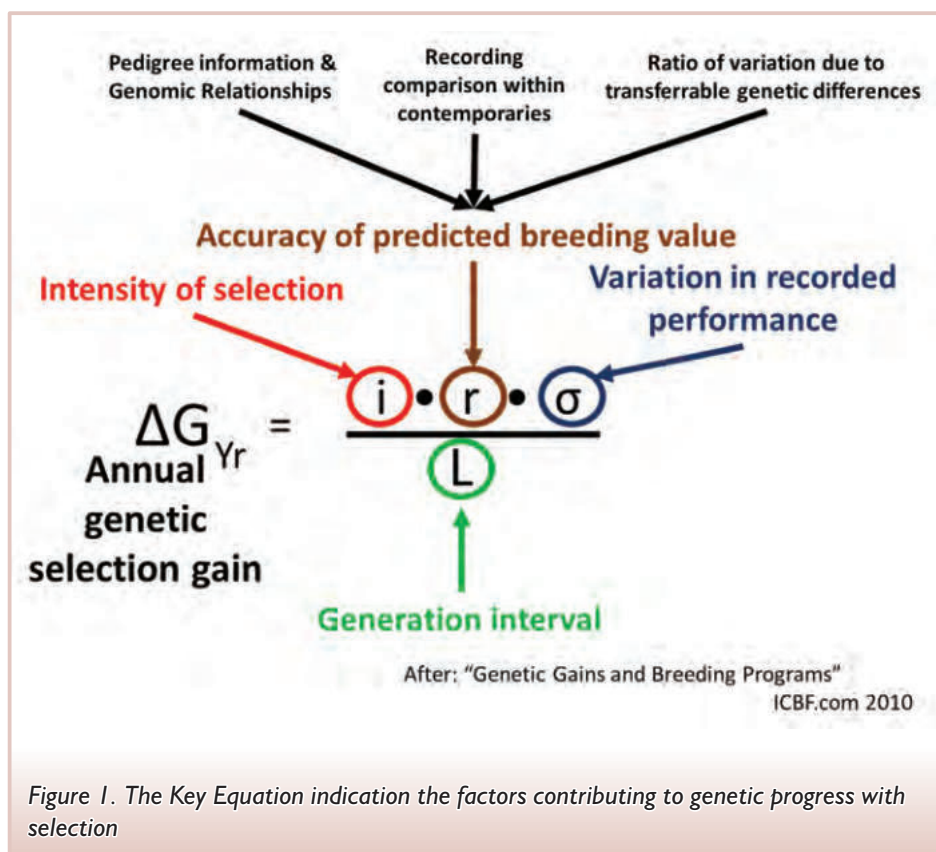
environment (such as putting up fences, applying other nutritional practices, treating or preventing diseases, etc.), natural selection will continuously take place, favouring those animals best suited to such conditions.

Statement 2: “Variation is bad in breeding farm animals.”

Although contrary to belief among some people involved with animal breeding, the basis of all selection remains variation. Without variation, no selection can take place, and it will be impossible to improve on existing production, reproduction, adaptation, product quality or any other property for production and other animals. Even for a breed (and obviously a species) to survive, variation at genetic merit level is essential.

“There can be little doubt that the existence of genetic variation is advantageous to the evolutionary survival of a species, the advantage it confers being the ability to evolve rapidly and to meet the needs of a changing environment, both through the course of time and to colonisation of new localities. Sexual reproduction and outbreeding are necessary conditions for the continued existence of genetic variation...” (Introduction to Quantitative Genetics. DS Falconer, The Roland Press Company, 1960).

The “key equation” for genetic progress (ΔG) through (artificial) selection is well known:



Irrespective of the desired trait or traits considered for selection, a reduction in variation will lead to a reduction in genetic gain obtained through selection.

Statement 3: “Faster genetic progress will be obtained for traits with a higher heritability.”

Who has heard the phrase similar this one: “By selecting for more highly heritable traits, as contributors to female fertility, faster genetic gain is possible”.

In essence this means that it is implied that direct selection for a less heritable trait will result in slower genetic gains that indirectly selecting for it with an indicator trait with a higher heritability.

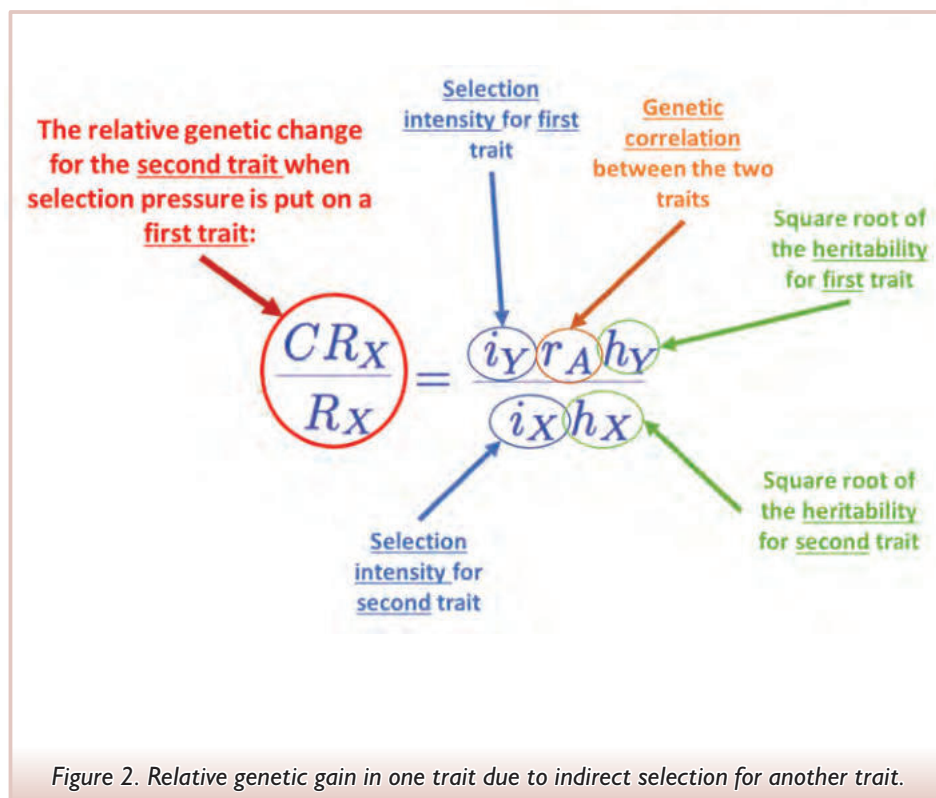
When looking at Figure 1 it is clear that the key factors contributing to change through genetic selection are how intense you select (what portion of the animals are selected from the group offered for selection, and how much their average performance differ from the originals), how much the decision

depends on a true reflection of each animal's genetic merit for the trait (was BLUP used, for example that take the relative transferable genetic differences into consideration) and ultimately the variation in performance from available.

Statement 4: “Indirect selection using different trait, result in higher genetic gains for traits with a lower heritability.”

Even in negating the fact that modern genetic merit predictions account for lowly heritable traits, such as female fertility, and that selection progress is primarily dependant on genetic variation, the myth of selecting for indicator traits (indirect selection) even in the presence of breeding value predictions for the primary traits, will always lead for faster gains where this major trait is lowly heritable.

Although appearing to be very complicated, the equation in Figure 2 shows the relative effectiveness where an indicator trait with high heritability is used for genetic gains in a related desirable trait.



The factors at play will be the heritability estimates of both traits, the genetic correlation between them and the selection intensity of the trait used to change the performance in the second trait. Selection intensity depends on the proportion of animals selected and the (phenotypic) variation for the selected trait. A ground level example will be where breeders want to select for more fertile cows, as expressed in the inter calving period (ICP) over the first four calves (“Cow fertility”) but uses indirect selection based on condition scores (BCS) (recorded in contemporary groups at a time of maximum variation, for example after winter) of replacement heifers. Even with heritability estimations of six percent for ICP (SA Stud Book calculations and average from numerous studies) and 25% (average from numerous studies) for BCS and a genetic correlation of 40% between the traits (the higher level from numerous studies), the effectiveness of the indirect selection will be in the region of nine percent!

The question could therefore be asked: “Is it really then bad to use indirect selection?” The answer will be a calculated “No, it is not bad, it is just not as effective as direct selection”. This is also given the trait targeted is well defined, recorded accurately, shows adequate variation and accurate genetic predictions are

available. It is also a good practice to include indicator traits, where available, in a selection index (a single value that includes all traits of economic importance) value. Indirect selections are frequently used for trait that are difficult, impossible or expensive to measure on breeding animals.

Statement 5: “Inbreeding is useful for genetic progress (and therefore a good thing).”

The average effects of inbreeding on animal performance have been researched far and wide. Many well written, well documented and very well peer reviewed scientific and other articles were written on the negative effects that high inbreeding levels have on traits of economic important, especially those associated with fitness. In essence, high inbreeding result in animals carrying the same forms (allele) of genes, leading to less variation and the ability to counter deleterious forms of the genes. Inbreeding is a “state” rather than a means of selecting animals. This also reduces the variation with a resultant ability to adapt to changing environmental pressures and usually a lower immune response. As the saying goes: one swallow doesn't make a summer. Why would the argument

therefore be that one exceptional high inbred animal should be the norm? With reference to the “key equation” for expected genetic progress through selection, highly inbred animals will show less variation in performance and have lower fitness levels (survival and fertility). These are all factors influencing the rate of genetic gain as illustrated in Figure 3.

The factors changing the gene frequency in populations (breeds, for example) are selection (natural and/or artificial), mutation, migration and genetic drift. The first three is known as “systematic processes” while the forth one is known as a “dispersive process” Falconer, 1960). Selection is the means of ensuring higher levels of the desired form of genes, whereas genetic drift could result in the fixation of undesirable forms of genes, as has happened in many instances in the past. It is simply not worth the risk.

Learn from the masters, use common sense, apply technological advances and know the underpinning science when selecting the animals that will produce progeny suited for your clients' profitability. That should be the main objectives for Stud Breeders.

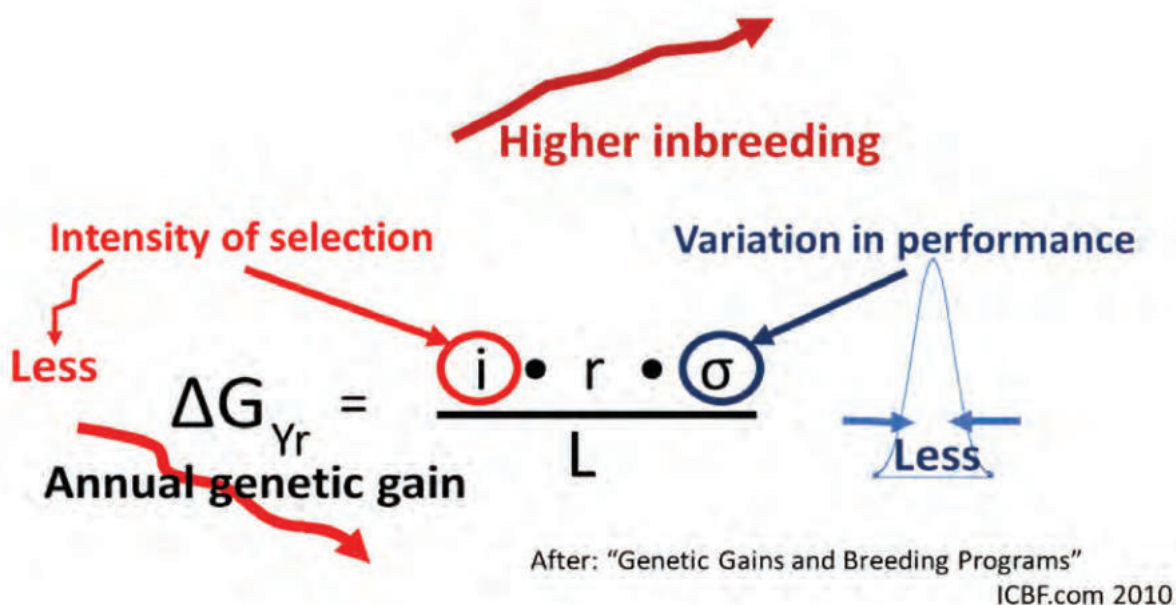


Figure 3. The impact of high average inbreeding levels on genetic gain through selection



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Management of Young Beef Females

Pre- and post-weaning nutritional supplementation of developing heifers.

Cliff Lamb – Angus Journal  October 2023

Development of replacement heifers is a major economic investment, with costs associated with managing heifers prior to weaning their first calf recovered through subsequent calf crops.

In beef cow-calf operations, profitability can be directly tied to the productive lifespan of cows within the herd. Management decisions made over the first year of life can influence heifer performance and reproduction, as well as play a key role in establishing heifer fertility and longevity. Therefore, it is critical to understand not only how management practices affect reproductive performance and lifetime productivity, but evaluate if fertility can be enhanced based on development strategies utilized.

The primary goal of development of replacement heifers is to optimize reproductive performance, economic efficiency and lifetime productivity of heifers. Heifers are expected to grow to 65-75% of mature size, attain puberty and produce their first calf within the first two years of life.

Nutrition has been a major focus within heifer development research, because it is the management tool producers have the most control over. Extensive research has been conducted evaluating the effects of nutritional management during development on puberty attainment, reproductive tract development, fertility and reproductive efficiency in beef heifers.

This research has not only established a strong relationship between nutrition and reproduction, but has sought to identify management strategies that can be utilized in both intensive and low-input or extensive systems.

Before implementing a management or nutritional strategy, producers should understand the relative benefits of those strategies.

Preweaning management

Preweaning body weight gain influences age at puberty more than postweaning growth. Heifers who attain puberty at the beginning of the breeding season have been reported to have an increase in average daily gain from birth to weaning and were heavier at weaning. In addition, a greater proportion of heifers pubertal by the start of the first breeding season are those that are born in the first 21 days of the calving season.

Early calthood nutritional strategies and early weaning have provided additional insights into the effects of nutrition and management of calves before 7 months of age.

Some of this work has evaluated programming the onset of puberty through the use of stair-step type diets, where nutrition is increased and decreased during different developmental windows. The onset of puberty occurred at a younger age in early-weaned heifers fed to target a high rate of gain between four and six months of age compared to heifers fed to attain a low rate of gain during the same developmental window.

In the same study, early-weaned heifers fed to attain a low rate



of gain between four and six months of age, who were then stepped up to target a high rate of gain from six to nine months of age, had the majority of heifers attain puberty between 11 and 14 months of age.

While preweaning nutrition and early weaning can decrease age at puberty, challenges exist in implementing these strategies. In most cow-calf operations, especially extensive systems, management of preweaning nutrition is limited. Creep-feeding or creep-grazing can increase nutrient intake of calves and increase preweaning performance.

In many scenarios, creep-feeding has a low economic return and is not an economically viable option for many operations. Furthermore, producers generally utilize early-weaning strategies in response to drought or limited feed conditions or as a means to improve reproductive performance within the cow herd. Regardless of the potential improvement in age at puberty, increased feed inputs and labor, as well as challenges with managing lighter-weight calves, have limited the utilization of early weaning as a management strategy for developing replacement heifers.

Postweaning supplementation

Increasing the postweaning energy intake has led to positive effects on the reproductive physiology of heifers. Research led by Philippe Moriel at the University of Florida has

demonstrated heifers supplemented with concentrate dry matter at 1.75% of the body weight for the entire development period (seven months from weaning through breeding) had greater overall average daily gain, puberty attainment before the start of the breeding season, and pregnancy rates compared to heifers supplemented at 1.25% of their body weight. In addition, lifetime productivity is significantly improved when heifers calve early in their first calving season. Supplementation at 1.75% also increased the percentage of heifers calving during the first four weeks of calving season.

Conclusion

Nutritional management of heifers during the first year of life is critical in establishing the foundation for fertility, productivity and longevity in a beef herd. Decisions made regarding nutritional management of heifers can help program puberty attainment, fertility and the ovarian reserve, potentially allowing for increases in reproductive performance and longevity, resulting in improved profitability.

Overall, identification of management strategies that effectively use resources, enhance reproduction and longevity, as well as allow adaptation of heifers to future production environments will provide producers additional opportunities for profitability and success in their operations.



Photo: Martiens le Roux

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**MOLATEK**

How to use *performance* data

M Scholtz, F Jordaan and M MacNeil • ARC Animal Production, Irene

Performance data are presented to help you to choose the animals to buy and how much you want to pay for them. To make the best decisions, proper interpretation of the data is essential. Keep in mind the “Breeder's Equation” is:

$$\text{Phenotype} = \text{Genotype} + \text{Environment.}$$

The phenotype is equal to the genotype of the animal plus the effect of the environment in which it was raised. Most phenotypic weights and measures are less than 50% heritable (and sometimes much less). Thus, most of what we see and measure is due to the environment and not to the genetics of the animal. **But you do not want to buy the environment?** You cannot take it home with you in any case. The way to evaluate and buy genetic potential is to focus on the Estimated Breeding Values (EBV). Statistical science has been used to make the EBV the best indication of each animal's genetic potential. Use the EBV to compare the animals in the sale offering. For those who are importing genetic material from the United States, remember that the EBV of any animal is twice its EPD. The calves from a bull with a weaning weight direct EBV of +20 kg are expected to weight 5 kg more than the calves for a bull with a weaning direct EBV of +10. The calves from the bull with the higher EBV will therefore bring more money when they are sold. The same simple arithmetic works to compare two animals for any other trait using the corresponding EBV.



Photo: Wilru Campher



Photo: Martiens le Roux

No animal is good for every trait. There are trade-offs to be considered. EBV indexes express the genetic value of an animal relative to some base population. How that base population is defined determines the value of the index for the EBV. Because the EBV indexes are all on the same scale they may create the subjective impression that all traits are of equal economic value. This simply is not true. For example, even though weaning weight direct and weaning weight maternal are expressed on the same scale (kg), weaning weight direct has more value because it does not require processing the energy in the grass through the cow as does weaning weight maternal. Compare this to a negative 15-day difference in inter-calving period (ICP) between two animals. This difference produces the expectation that the future daughters of the animal with the numerically lower EBV will produce a greater number of progeny than the daughters of the animal with the higher EBV. Having more offspring to sell will result in more income. These simple comparisons, while glossing over a number of details in the calculation of economic values for different traits, illustrate the fact that not all traits are of the same value. Thus, the EBV indexes for different traits cannot be considered equivalent even if they are numerically identical.

Think about how the animals will be used in your breeding program. Maybe that use is simply to add new genetics to your herd. Then their relationship with the animals that are currently in your herd should be considered in addition to the

EBV. You are looking for pedigrees that are different from those that are widely represented in your herd today. A second possibility is that the animals are intended to correct a deficiency in the genetic profile of your herd. If, for example, you believe your herd to be short on growth potential then you want to emphasize indications of high growth. A third possibility is simply that your herd is genetically well matched with the environment of your farm, and you just need to add a couple of stud bulls to your battery. In this case, you want to look for balance in the EBV profile. Across the board, you'd like to have the animals you choose to have more or less similar EBV indexes. If you believe the herd from which you are considering buying animals to be genetically a bit better than your herd, then average EBV indexes should be an improvement. Finally consider the case where you are buying a bull (**Figure 1**) to use on commercial cows and will be selling all the resulting calves. In this circumstance, the EBV for ICP and maternal weaning weight should be ignored completely. This is in contrast to the situation where you anticipate retaining some of the progeny of your newly purchased bulls. Then more attention should be given to these “maternal” traits as well.



Figure 1: From these pictures you cannot tell which bull will suit your requirements the best

It may also be important to look at cow efficiency. Cow efficiency values are estimated from cow weight (indicates inputs) + weaning weight (indicates output) + inter-calving period (how frequent is a calf produced). Most service providers calculate a selection index for cow efficiency based on these components, and this is also published in auction catalogues.

One final thought. Extreme EBV's are not always better than those that are less extreme. The weaning weight maternal EBV provides a classic example of this phenomenon. Superficially, higher values of the weaning weight maternal EBV create the expectation of heavier weaner calves and thus greater income. However, it takes feed energy to produce milk. If your farm cannot provide the necessary energy, then their rebreeding after calving may be delayed resulting in there being fewer calves at the end of the season. In a slightly different line of thinking, a high EBV for weaning weight direct may not result in heavier calves, if the environment in which they are to be raised is not sufficient to support their genetic potential for growth. There is some optimal EBV profile for animals to be raised on your farm. Find that optimal EBV profile and buy animals that correspond to it.

Don't just buy good looks. **Buy genetics!** EBV's are the GPS that helps you get this done.



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Understanding the Process Behind **IMPORTED** Semen:

What Breeders Need to Know

The Angus breed is recognized as the beef breed with the largest genetic pool in the world. Many of our local stud breeders draw from this global resource to strengthen their herds, introduce new bloodlines, and enhance specific traits within their existing breeding programmes.

While it is widely acknowledged that our locally produced herd sires are of an excellent standard – with many believing that our Red Angus in particular often outperform their imported counterparts – each breeder has the freedom to decide which route best suits their breeding objectives. As many breeders do, one may choose to use a combination of imported semen and locally sourced stud bulls.

Imported semen is readily available, albeit at a cost. We strongly recommend that breeders ensure that any imported semen they purchase has been properly registered with the Angus Society of South Africa.

Approximately a year ago, Council resolved that all imported semen must be evaluated against the local Angus population and may only be imported if it meets or exceeds our national standard. This requirement remains challenging, as each import agency naturally has its own goals and priorities.

When an import agency approaches the Society for approval of a new semen sire, a formal process begins. Only once all required data, documentation, and results have been received by the Society will the imported sire be registered and uploaded onto Logix.

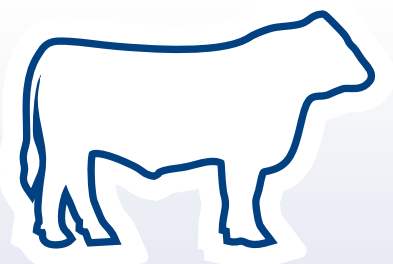
Documentation required to register a new semen donor

1. Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs):
The first step is to compare the bull's EBVs with those of the current South African population.

2. Genotype sample:
Once EBVs are approved, the agency must supply a semen straw for genotyping. The raw genomic data is sent to SA Stud Book for analysis. The Society receives a summarized batch report containing all genetic results, including myostatin status.
3. Microsatellite DNA profile:
Importers must also provide a microsatellite DNA profile, as genomic tests are not always compatible with the routine DNA profiles used in South Africa. This gives breeders flexibility when doing sire verification—either through genotype comparison or traditional DNA verification.
4. Five-generation pedigree:
This ensures complete lineage information for the semen donor.
5. Import permit:
Issued by the Registrar's office, this final document completes the required paperwork.

Once all documentation has been submitted, the bull is registered and allocated a South African registration number. The genomic data is then linked to this number, giving breeders additional information when considering imported semen for purchase.

This process naturally takes time. Unfortunately, some breeders and semen buyers are unwilling to wait for the proper procedures to be completed. This often leads to complications when calves are born and no registration number exists for the semen donor due to outstanding documentation or missing data.





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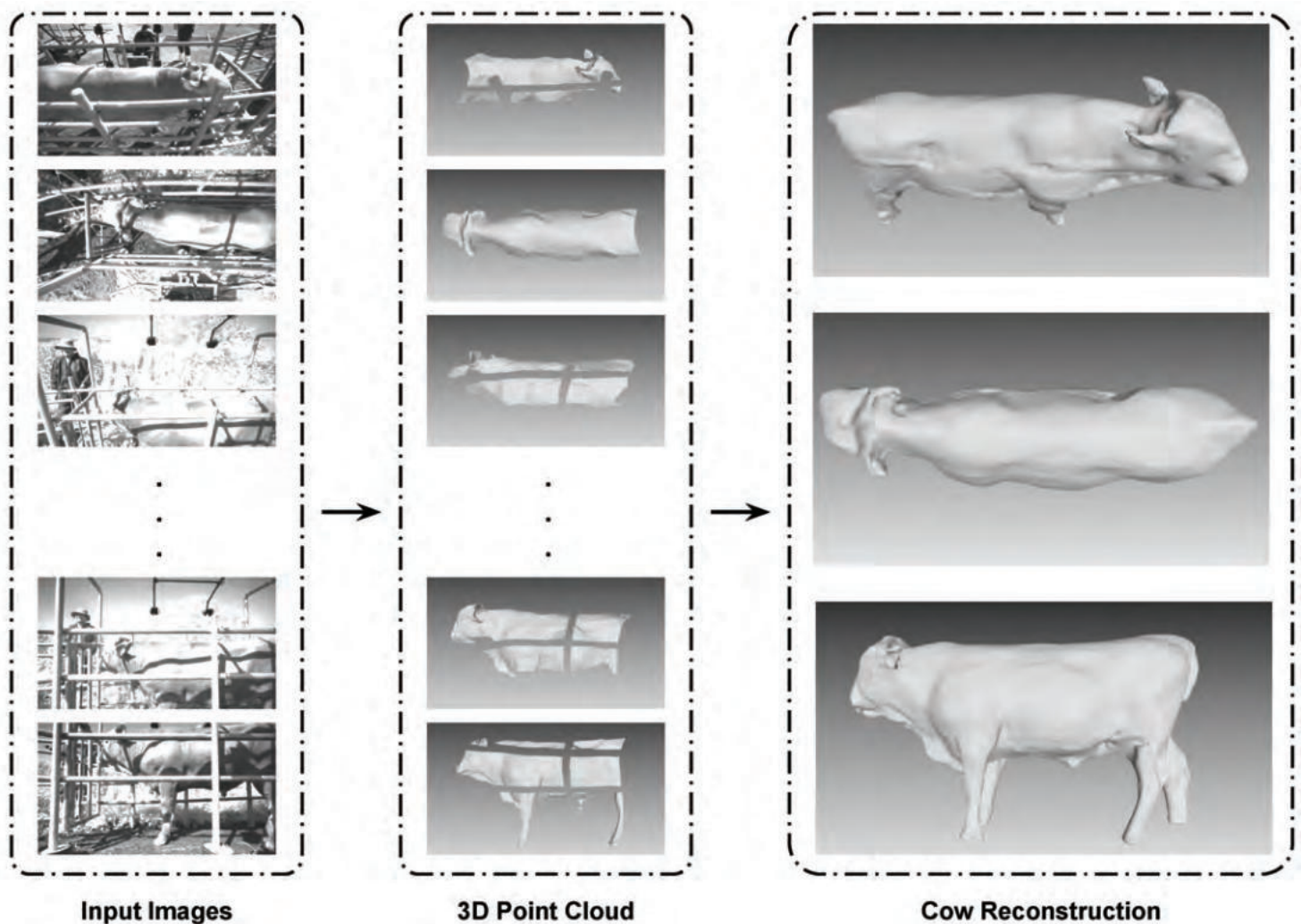
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From manual measurement to Remote Phenotyping

What the future holds



Dr Japie van der Westhuizen



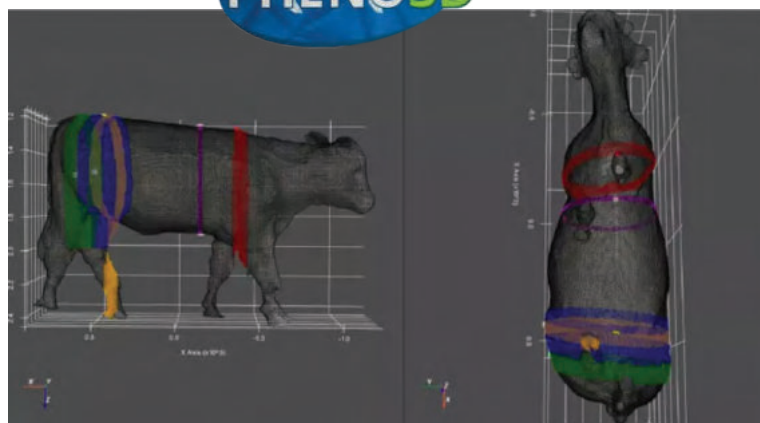
Traditional live-animal measurements, especially body dimensions, body condition scoring, and visual conformation assessment, require handling, restraint of animals and trained observers. Measurements are therefore normally infrequent, requires effort and time, is in effect very expensive (time and travel). Furthermore, observer effects are unavoidable, often bias, especially for subjective assessments. For breeding purposes, these factors not only limits data volume, but also consistency, repeatability and accuracy.

Remote phenotyping technologies aim to overcome these constraints through non-contact measurement. Using combinations of RGB (visible light) cameras, depth sensors, and structured light or laser systems, animals can be reconstructed as 3D models from which body dimensions, volume, and shape descriptors are automatically extracted.

Although one of the main aims are automation, the ability to measure animals repeatedly and objectively without increasing labour or stress is also of paramount importance. Phenotype recordings then become continuous data rather than isolated (once-off) observations.

Globally research and development takes place at public funded institutions as well as part of commercial ventures. The rapid developments of machine learning as building blocks for artificial intelligence is currently fast tracking these developments.

PHENO3D: A Breeding-Oriented Example



The PHENO3D project, being developed within the French beef cattle performance recording system, illustrates a decisive shift in focus. Rather than developing imaging technology in isolation, PHENO3D was designed explicitly to support genetic evaluation.

The system uses a multi-sensor 3D imaging corridor through which calves pass during routine handling, typically at weaning.

Depth cameras reconstruct the animal's full body surface, and algorithms automatically extract:

- live weight estimates,
- linear body measurements,
- morphological descriptors related to conformation,
- and volumetric traits derived from body shape.

The primary objective is not to create entirely new traits, but to automate the collection of traits already used in breeding schemes while removing scorer subjectivity and reducing labour constraints.

This distinction is important. Many imaging studies demonstrate technical feasibility under controlled conditions. PHENO3D addresses scalability, integration with existing recording structures, and compatibility with national genetic evaluation systems. A transition from engineering research to trustworthy operational phenotyping.

Current Areas of Progress

Automated body measurement and growth monitoring

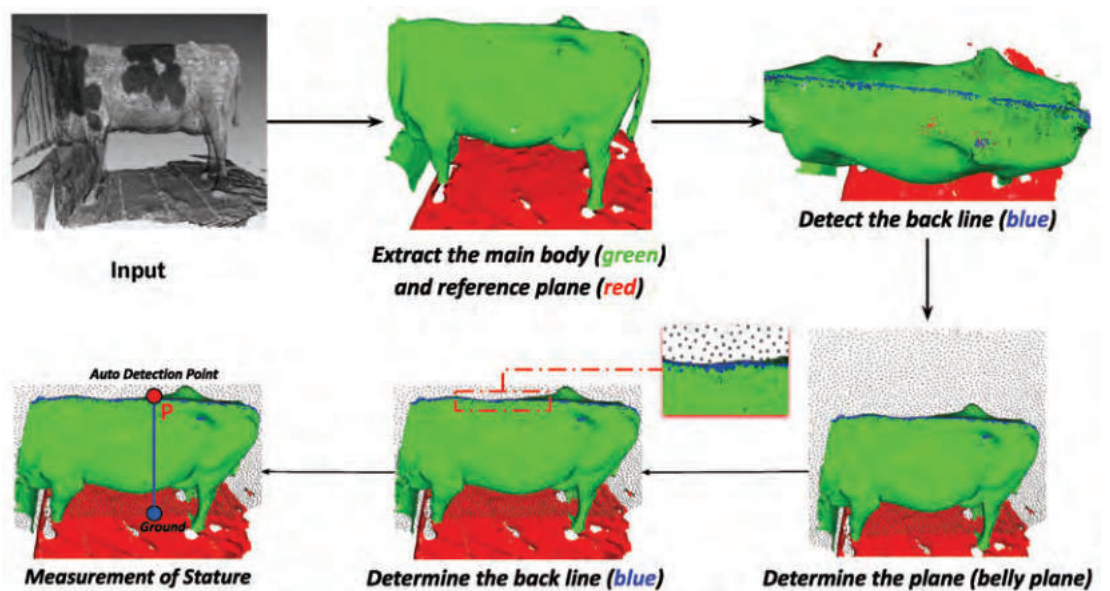


3D imaging systems now estimate live weight and growth trajectories from body volume with accuracy approaching conventional weighing under controlled conditions. In dairy systems, overhead depth cameras installed in parlours or passageways allow repeated measurements throughout lactation.

For breeders, repeated measurements are more informative than single records. Growth curves, maturity patterns, and condition changes over time become measurable phenotypes rather than inferred characteristics.

Objective body condition scoring

Body condition scoring has long suffered from inter-observer variation, therefore a lack of true objectivity. Depth imaging systems can quantify anatomical regions associated with fat deposition and produce consistent estimates across farms and time. This improves the reliability of functional traits linked to fertility and robustness.



Individual identification and longitudinal data

Advances in computer vision allow identification of individual animals through visual features or depth profiles. This enables continuous phenotyping without manual data capture, which is essential if high-frequency measurements are used to contribute meaningfully to breeding programmes.

Lessons from Carcass Imaging

Automated carcass grading systems demonstrated decades ago that imaging can generate economically relevant measurements at scale. The emerging difference is that phenotypes are now captured earlier in life.

Projects such as PHENO3D create the possibility of linking live-animal morphology directly with carcass outcomes. If validated, this allows earlier selection decisions and improved prediction of slaughter performance. However, these relationships still require large datasets and careful validation.



Technical and Biological Limitations

Despite rapid progress, several limitations remain:

- posture and movement still affect measurement precision,
- environmental conditions influence image quality,
- equipment costs remain significant for extensive systems,
- and trait definition is not yet standardised across different platforms.

A more fundamental issue is biological interpretation. Imaging systems measure geometry; breeding programmes require traits with economic and biological meaning. Without validation against production efficiency, fertility, or carcass value, increased measurement precision alone does not improve genetic progress.

PHENO3D is an example that partially addresses this by focusing on traits already embedded in breeding objectives, but long-term value will depend on demonstrating genetic correlations with economically relevant outcomes.

Implications for Livestock Breeders

For breeders, the importance of remote phenotyping lies in scale and consistency rather than being a technological novelty.

The main advantages are:

1. Larger numbers of objectively measured animals.
2. Reduced subjective scoring bias.
3. Repeated measurements across life stages.
4. Improved compatibility with genomic selection, where prediction accuracy depends heavily on phenotype quality and quantity.

A gradual transition from limited data collection to high-frequency phenotypic datasets is anticipated. This advancement enhances the capacity to identify emerging traits, such as growth dynamics or morphological

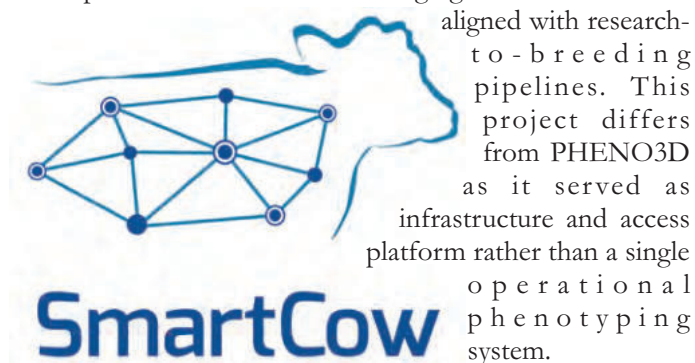
development. However, it also necessitates rigorous statistical analysis to ensure biological signals are distinguished from measurement “noise”.

Other systems

While PHENO3D presently stands as the most advanced solution for automating the processes from usable phenotypes to genetic merit, it is important to acknowledge that other approaches also warrant mentioning.

SmartCow (EU Horizon 2020 project)

SmartCow was a European research infrastructure initiative integrating cattle research facilities to enable high-quality phenotyping and data collection across systems. It was aimed at infrastructure for advanced phenotyping, support for the development of sensor and imaging-derived traits and



Breed4Food (Netherlands)

Breed4Food is a long-running Netherlands public-private research programme linking Wageningen University, breeding companies, and industry partners. It focuses on high-throughput phenotyping, sensor-derived functional traits and the integration of phenotypes into genomic evaluation. This system can possibly be described as representing the dairy-sector equivalent of PHENO3D's philosophy. Therefore, moving from experimental measurements toward traits usable in genetic evaluation. The emphasis is more on functional and efficiency traits than on 3D morphology.



National or institutional 3D imaging platforms (France, Ireland, Nordic countries)

Several groups are running multi-camera 3D scanning corridors, automated conformation scoring research and imaging-based weight prediction systems.

These are often not branded projects but research platforms within national recording schemes. PHENO3D is notable because it has moved further toward operational deployment.

USA

Parallel initiatives, particularly in North America, are focusing on integration of sensor and farm data streams for management decision support. These programmes differ from projects such as PHENO3D in that their primary objective is operational optimisation rather than generation of standardised phenotypes for breeding.

ICAR-aligned imaging and phenotyping initiatives

Beyond the named projects and initiatives, the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR) has become increasingly important in standardisation discussions involving automated body measurement, imaging-derived conformation traits and validation protocols for sensor-based phenotypes.

This is strategically important because breeding adoption depends on standardised trait definitions.

Outlook

Remote phenotyping is unlikely to replace conventional evaluation methods in the very near future. Its more realistic role is to expand the range and reliability of measurable traits in live animals. Dairy systems, with controlled animal flow, are likely to adopt these technologies first, followed by beef systems as costs decline and robustness of repeated measurements improves.

Programs such as PHENO3D show that the main challenge is no longer proving the effectiveness of 3D measurement, but rather how to incorporate it into breeding systems where phenotypic data guide selection choices. Ultimately, the lasting impact will rely less on imaging technology itself and more on how well these data streams are converted into selection criteria that are both biologically insightful and economically valuable.

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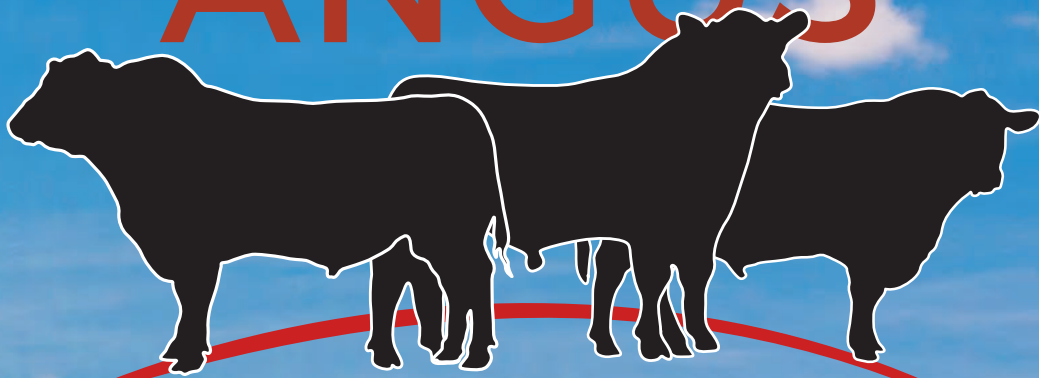


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Improving Fertility in Herds Using Bull Breeding

Fertility is at the heart of every successful cattle operation.

The ability to consistently produce **healthy calves** is vital for economic success.

Cliff Lamb, Texas A&M University - **Angus Journal**  February 2025

Bull breeding, where bulls naturally mate with cows, remains the cornerstone of most cattle operations. However, achieving high fertility rates through bull breeding requires a combination of strategies, ranging from effective herd management to advances in reproductive technologies. By improving fertility, cattle producers can increase productivity, reduce costs and enhance the profitability of their operations.

Fertility in cattle is influenced by several factors, including genetics, nutrition, health and management practices. Even though bulls are naturally designed for breeding, various challenges can affect their ability to impregnate cows

successfully. These include poor semen quality, low libido, environmental stress and diseases that affect reproductive health.

In addition to bull-related factors, cow fertility also plays a significant role. Issues such as postpartum anestrus, inadequate nutrition or hormonal imbalances can prevent cows from becoming pregnant.

Therefore, improving fertility in beef herds requires an integrated approach that addresses both bull- and cow-factors.



Photo: Carl Miles

Bull health and reproductive soundness

A key factor in improving fertility in bull breeding is ensuring the bulls are in optimal health. Bulls that are sick, undernourished or stressed are less likely to perform well in breeding programs.

A breeding soundness exam (sometimes referred to as a BSE) prior to the breeding season is crucial for assessing a bull's semen quality and reproductive health. Along with a physical exam, a breeding soundness exam evaluates semen motility, morphology and concentration, which are all indicators of a bull's ability to breed effectively. In addition, bulls require nutrition that supports their reproductive health, including adequate levels of protein, minerals and vitamins. Deficiencies, particularly in trace minerals like zinc and selenium, can negatively affect sperm quality and overall fertility.

Furthermore, managing the bulls' stress levels is key to ensure they remain fertile. Bulls consistently exposed to high-stress environments, whether from poor housing conditions, competition with other bulls or travel, may experience reduced libido and semen quality.



Cow nutrition supplementation for fertility

Cows need a well-balanced diet to optimize fertility. Underfed or overfed cows may experience irregular estrous cycles, leading to infertility. Proper management of body condition scores (BCS) is crucial. Cows with an ideal BCS (neither too thin nor too fat) are more likely to cycle regularly and become pregnant.

In certain cases, supplemental feeding can help resolve fertility issues, particularly when cows are facing deficiencies in trace minerals or vitamins. For example, calcium and phosphorus are essential for maintaining healthy reproductive organs, while magnesium plays a role in preventing early pregnancy loss.

Disease management and prevention

Reproductive diseases, such as bovine viral diarrhea (BDV), brucellosis and leptospirosis, can have a significant effect on fertility in both bulls and cows. To improve fertility, it is important to implement a comprehensive herd health program that includes vaccination and regular disease screening. Vaccination programs should focus on diseases known to affect reproduction, such as BVD and infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR). These diseases can lead to reduced conception rates, abortions, or infertility. Working closely with a veterinarian to develop a herd health plan that minimizes the risk of disease is an important aspect of maintaining high fertility in bull-bred herds.

Bull-to-cow ration and breeding management

The ideal bull-to-cow ratio is another key factor in ensuring optimal fertility in bull breeding programs. Too many cows per bull can lead to overwork, resulting in reduced breeding efficiency and potential health issues for the bull.

On the other hand, too few cows per bull result in underutilization, reducing the overall breeding potential of the herd. The typical recommendation is one bull for every 25 to 30 cows, though this can vary based on factors such as the bull's age, health and the cows' fertility. In large herds, having multiple bulls ensures that breeding is spread out and that bulls are not overburdened, while allowing for genetic diversity.

Improving fertility in cattle herds with bull breeding requires a multifaceted approach, combining genetic selection, proper nutrition, disease management and proper reproductive technologies. By ensuring both bulls and cows are in optimal condition, farmers can enhance the reproductive success of their herds, leading to healthier calves, increased productivity and improved profitability.

As the cattle industry continues to evolve, these fertility improvement mechanisms will play an increasingly important role in helping farmers meet growing demand while maintaining sustainable operations.



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Thursday, 16 July 2026, Eastern Cape



Nutritional Development of Heifers

Helping your females achieve high levels of productivity

Bob Larson, Kansas State University – Angus Journal  December 2024

Photo: André Breytenbach

I recommend starting the breeding season for your heifers about one month ahead of the mature cows. Assuming most replacements are selected from heifers born in the first two months of the calving season, the heifer breeding season will start when they are 12 to 14 months of age.

Age and body weight are the two most important drivers for the onset of puberty. Most Angus heifers can reach puberty by 1 year of age if they attain 55-60% of their mature weight.

Some heifers will reach puberty at a lighter weight, but to be on the safe side, I recommend aiming to have heifers weigh 60% of their expected mature weight by 12 months of age.

For heifers that will have a mature weight of 1,200 pounds (lb.) (545 kg), they will need to weigh 720 lb. (327 kg). Heifers that mature at 1,400 lb. (635 kg) will need to weigh approximately 840 lb. (380 kg) in order to reach puberty.

Depending on weaning weight and mature weight, heifers typically need to gain between 1.25 and 1.75 lb. per day (.567 kg and .80 kg per day) (some will require up to 2.25 lb. (1 kg) per day) between weaning and breeding to reach their target weight. While heifers don't need to be fed a high-concentrate diet to reach these required gains, heifers grazing dormant forage or being fed good-quality hay will need to be supplemented with some grain or byproduct feeds in order to meet targeted weight gains.

The two greatest obstacles to reach puberty in a timely manner are poor quality forage and severe winter weather. When these two factors occur in the same year, weight gains from breeding can be less than necessary to have a high percentage of heifers become pregnant early in the breeding

season. While short-term nutritional challenges associated with isolated storms are not likely to have negative effects, longer-term nutritional challenges from poor quality or quantity of forage or several weeks of wet and cold temperatures can delay the onset of puberty.

To ensure heifers are ready to breed at the start of the breeding season, I recommend at least a subset be weighed at least once (and preferable more often) between weaning and yearling age. If the heifers are not meeting their targeted weight gains, the ration should be adjusted to allow them to reach 60% of their mature body weight by 12 months of age.

Once puberty is attained, nutrition must be at a level that allows the heifer to continue cycling, ovulate a fertile egg and establish pregnancy.

Nutritional demands of heifers during pregnancy exceed that of mature cows because the heifer is also using nutrients for her own growth and development. Deficiency of energy or protein for extended periods of time during any production phase will have a negative effect on fetal development, calf viability, milk production, and/or rebreeding for the next pregnancy.

Proper nutritional development of heifers from weaning to breeding is essential to ensure that a high percentage of heifers become pregnant early in their first breeding season. For spring-calving herds in much of the United States, that time coincides with winter weather and dormant forage. These constraints call for producers to carefully monitor heifer growth and to be ready to adjust rations if necessary to meet target breeding weights.



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Collection and Handling Semen for Optimal Fertility

Adopting best practices for artificial insemination

Cliff Lamb, Texas A&M University - Angus Journal  April 2025

Artificial insemination (AI) is a widely adopted reproductive technique in the beef cattle industry, offering a range of benefits, including improved genetics, cost savings and increased herd productivity.

However, the success of AI does not solely depend on choosing the right bull or cow; it also hinges on the proper handling of semen throughout the process.

From collecting to insemination, every step plays a crucial role in ensuring the best results. This article outlines the best practices for handling semen in cattle AI to maximize success rates.

Semen collection

A successful AI program begins with the collection of semen. For cattle, semen is typically collected using an artificial vagina (AV), a device designed to mimic the conditions of natural mating. The AV consists of a rubber or latex sheath, filled with warm water to simulate body temperature, allowing the bull to ejaculate into it. It's crucial the collection process is performed under sterile conditions to avoid contamination, as even the smallest number of bacteria can compromise the quality of the semen.

The semen collection is usually evaluated immediately for

volume, motility and concentration. Motility refers to the sperm's ability to move effectively, which is crucial for successful fertilization. If the semen does not meet minimum quality standards (typically a motility rate less than 70%) it may need to be discarded or used for other purposes.

For the best results, semen should be collected from a bull that has been well-managed and has been exposed to a healthy management protocol, including vaccinations against venereal diseases.

Semen evaluation

Once collected, semen must be evaluated for quality. The key factors to assess are:

Sperm motility: Active, swimming sperm are necessary for successful fertilization. A high motility rate is essential for effective AI, with a target of 70% or better being ideal.

Sperm concentration: The sperm count per milliliter is also critical. The higher the sperm concentration, the greater the chances of successful fertilization.

Morphology: Healthy sperm should have normal shape and size. Abnormal sperm may struggle to reach or fertilize the egg, which can reduce the chances of conception. To assess



these factors, semen is examined under a microscope. If semen is deemed of poor quality, it may not be suitable for insemination and should be discarded or diluted further if it still shows promise. Semen that meets the required standard is then processed for storage.

Semen Preservation

Preserving semen is essential for both short-term and long-term use in AI. The process of preservation allows semen to be stored for weeks, months or even years without compromising its viability. There are two primary methods of semen preservation: cooling and freezing.

Cooling is used for short-term storage, typically when semen needs to be used within 72 hours. It involves reducing the semen temperature to 39°F (degrees Fahrenheit or **3.9°C degrees Celsius**) and maintain it at that temperature until it is inseminated. Cooling can help maintain sperm viability for a limited period, making it suitable for transporting semen over shorter distances.

Freezing semen is more common and used for a long-term preservation method. The semen is mixed with a cryoprotectant (a substance that prevent the formation of ice crystals), placed in small straws or vials, and then rapidly frozen to -320°F using liquid nitrogen. This method allows semen to be stored indefinitely and is often used for breeding programs that require genetic material to be preserved for future generations.

However, freezing and thawing are delicate processes which can damage sperm cells if done improperly, and thawing must be done with precision to avoid reducing motility. Therefore, training and experience are essential to ensure successful semen preservation.

Thawing semen

Thawing is perhaps the most critical step for a producer in the AI process when using frozen semen.

Improper thawing can lead to a significant loss in sperm motility and fertility potential. The thawing process must be done quickly and at the right temperature to prevent sperm from overheating or freezing again. To thaw semen, straws containing the semen are typically immersed in a water bath set to a temperature of 98°F for between 30 to 60 seconds.

This process is performed carefully to ensure the semen warms evenly and rapidly, as slower thawing can result in cell damage.

Once the semen has thawed, it should be used immediately. Thawed semen can't be refrozen, as the freezing-thawing process can cause irreversible damage to the sperm.



Additionally, it's important to avoid any temperature fluctuations after thawing, as sperm can lose motility quickly in these conditions.

Insemination procedure

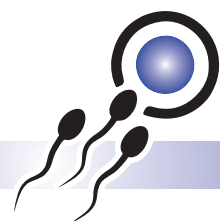
The insemination process is a critical step in AI. For successful conception, it is essential to inseminate the cow at the right time in her estrous cycle – when she is ovulating, and the egg is available for fertilization. Timing of insemination is typically determined by monitoring signs of heat (estrus) or using tools like progesterone testing and ultrasound.

When performing AI, the semen is introduced into the cow's uterus using an AI gun, which would need to pass through the cervix, where the semen is carefully deposited into the uterine body. The AI gun must be sterile, and the procedure should be performed gently to avoid injury to the cow. Proper technique is critical to ensure that the semen reaches the correct part of the reproductive tract, maximizing the chances of successful fertilization.

Steps to success

Handling semen with care and precision is crucial to the success of AI in cattle. Every step, from collecting and evaluation to preservation, thawing and insemination, plays a significant role in maximizing fertility rates.

By following best practices, cattle producers can ensure the highest likelihood of success and continue to improve herd genetics efficiently. With proper training, equipment and attention to detail, AI remains a powerful tool in modern cattle breeding, providing valuable improvements in productivity and genetic advancement.





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Selecting Lowly Heritable Traits

Where does **variation** come from, and why is it so important?

Andre Garcia, senior geneticist - Angus Journal  October 2025

Traits that have a higher heritability can be quicker to make changes in than traits with a lower heritability. The heritability of a trait tells us what proportion of the variation we observe is due to genetics. The key word here is variation.

Variation is the key to genetic improvement

Variation is defined as a measure of spread in the data, and some traits have more variation than others. For instance, the more than 12 million adjusted weaning weights (WW) recorded in the American Angus database vary greatly from the lightest to the heaviest weaned calf, while functional longevity (FL) records vary from one to nine calves. This variation itself does not tell us much, and the more important question is, where does the variation come from?

As geneticists, we would like to claim all the observed variations is because of genetics; but we recognize this is not true. There are many sources of variation that influence traits in different ways. For instance, if you feed your cows appropriately and expose them earlier in the season, you most likely improve your herd's conception rate. The better conception rate is because of nutrition and management, and not related to genetics.

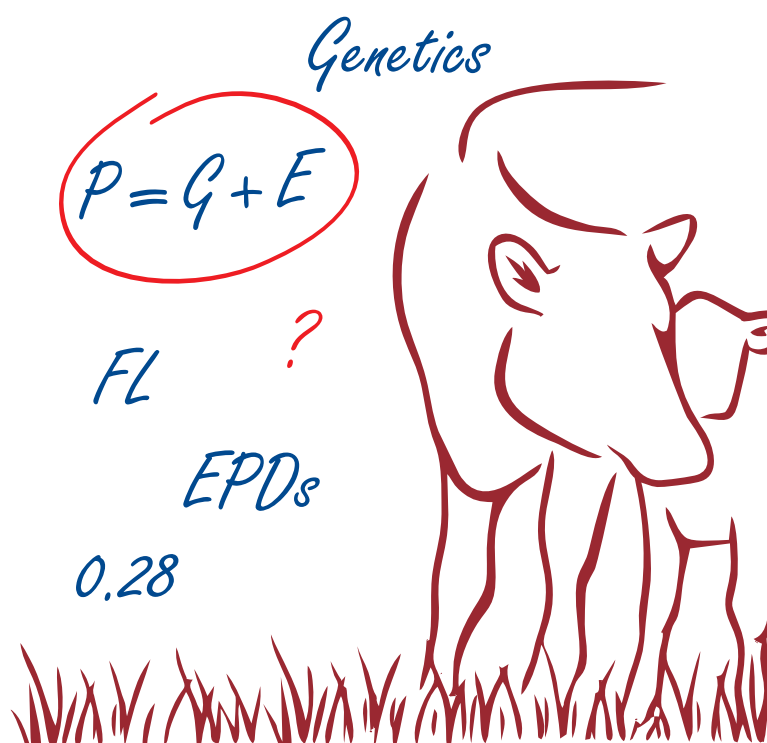
When the goal is to make genetic selection, we need to identify genetic variations, because that is what can be passed on through the generations. To do that, look at phenotype variation and separate what is causing it and how much of the variation is due to genetics.

The “how much” portion is what we call heritability. For instance, the heritability of WW is 0.28, which means of all the WW variation we observe, 28% is due to genetics and 72% is due to environment and management. For fertility-related traits like functional longevity, the heritability is much smaller, 0.1, meaning of the variation we observe in the number of calves cows have, 10% is due to genetics, while 90% is due to unknown environment and management effects.

What kind of variation?

When we look at what causes variation, it helps us better understand what factors are contributing to the variation we observe. We can break down the phenotypic variation we observe (P) into two components: genetic (G) and the environment (E). The E component can be further divided into known and unknown environmental effects (for instance, the cotemporary group is a source of known environmental variations). This gives us the classic $P = G + E$ formula.

In FL for example, 10% of the of the variation is due to genetics and the rest is nongenetic factors. The nongenetic



portion contains several components, many of which are captured by the contemporary group; such as the year, season, farm and management style the cows were raised in, which captures climatic variation across years and farms. Some of these are accounted for by the contemporary group, while others fall in those unknown environmental effects contributing to the remaining nongenetic variation.

Another important component of the variation we observe in FL records is the variation over time. FL is a longitudinal trait, which simply means the performance records are measured during a cow's lifetime. This is different from traits measured only once in a lifetime, such as WW.

For FL, the variation over time is important because what happens in one year's breeding season may affect next years reproductive performance. These cumulative factors, most of which are not observed or recorded, cause the unknown environmental variation to be a much higher fraction of the phenotypical variation than other traits, such as WW, making the heritability lower.

For example, if a cow calves earlier in the calving season, she will have more time to recover her body condition and return to estrus sooner, potentially improving her chances of getting pregnant. Being bred earlier or later in the season is a nongenetic component, but still affects her lifetime performance.

One could argue there is a genetic component to breeding earlier as well, but for this example we are focusing on the nongenetic part only. Other examples of nongenetic factors include nutrition and management during early growth, disease exposure when young, management practices year over year, and bull/semen interactions.

Modelling all sources of variation

The FL genetic evaluation model is specifically designed to handle longitudinal data and long-lasting nongenetic effects with a component called the permanent environmental effect. Permanent environmental accounts for factors that affect the cow's performance consistently across time for all records. This component and modelling strategy is used for any traits in which one animal can have multiple records (e.g., foot scores, teat and udder scores, FL, maternal component of WW).

For FL the permanent environment accounts for 84% of the variations we observe. If you are doing the math, 10% is genetics (FL heritability of 0.1) 84% is the permanent environment (consistent environmental variation across time), and the remaining 6% is due to environmental variation that is unique to a specific breeding season that does not affect subsequent performance.

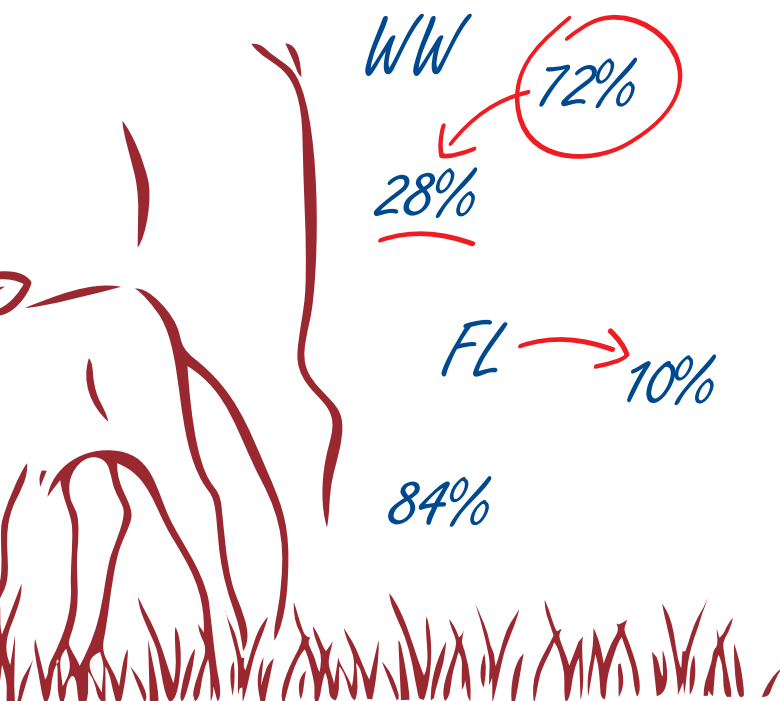
What does it mean for such a large proportion of the variation we observe in FL to be due to the permanent environmental component? The environment, nutrition and management, even early in the cow's lifetime, play major roles in whether a cow has a calf or not. So, for cows with exceptional performance, much of that is a result of your good management practices. This is not different in other traits, even for WW, with a heritability of 0.28. That means 72% of the variation we observe is due to your management and stewardship practices preweaning.

Is the hope lost for genetics?

At a superficial level, it may seem like genetic selection is not worth the effort since for some traits, it's responsible for only a small proportion of the variation you see. However, it is quite the opposite. Genetic selection is the type of improvement that in many cases, while slower/smaller, is cumulative and permanent. As the population improves genetically, all herds benefit from it. Do not be discouraged by traits with lower heritability and EPDs with a smaller spread, as long as there is variation to select from (e.g., better vs. worse cows).

A disciplined and consistent selection program allows you to make progress, even in more challenging traits, and those can arguable be some of the most important. As you work on your plan for genetic improvement, think about it as a long-term investment where *time in* the market is more important than *timing* the market, and each generation builds incrementally on the last, compounding gains over time.

Decades of election for weaning weight and carcass traits have proven that selection results in success; and with time, selection for newer traits such as foot scores, functional longevity and others will also improve the population and move the productivity needle.



Grass Tetany

Providing magnesium to keep the herd safe.

Bob Larson, Kansas State University - Angus Journal  April 2025

A disease associated with lush early-season grass is grass tetany. The disease is also called grass staggers or hypomagnesemia, and is caused when blood levels of the mineral magnesium become low due to a combination of plant and animal factors.

Although young, growing animals can occasionally be diagnosed with grass tetany (particularly if grazing grasses associated with grain production such as wheat, rye or barley), lactating cows are the most commonly affected.

Milk contains relatively high levels of magnesium, and cows in late pregnancy and early lactating cows have high dietary requirements for the mineral. In addition, deficiencies of calcium or phosphorus, which are also required in high amounts in lactating cows, will increase the risk for grass tetany.

In cases of grass tetany, soil levels of magnesium are typically not deficient. But soil temperature affects magnesium uptake into the plants, and grass tetany is associated with early spring before soil temperature is consistently warm. Cool-season grass pastures, particularly if fertilized with nitrogen or a spring application of potash, are most commonly associated with grass tetany.

However, even cows on unfertilized native pastures can have the disease if heavy spring rains promote rapid early forage growth. Forages prone to cause grass tetany are deficient in magnesium and sodium and have an excess of potassium. Potassium, which can be very high in lush, early-growth forage, interferes with magnesium absorption from the gut, further decreasing the amount of available magnesium.

Signs, treatments and prevention

The first signs of grass tetany are nervousness, appearing overly alert and a stumbling gait. These signs progress to restlessness and aggressiveness. An affected cow's gait may vary from being stiff-legged to high-stepping to staggering.

An animal that has fallen and is unable to rise and has convulsions must be treated soon to prevent death. In fact, because of the rapid course of the disease, finding dead cows

with no previous signs of illness is commonly the first indication of the problem.

If cattle are identified early in the disease, treatment with a solution containing magnesium given into the vein will likely prevent death. If a cow has been down several hours, the outlook even with treatment is not positive. A cow that was down or staggering but was treated successfully can appear better for a few hours, and then the condition can return. To avoid these relapses, additional magnesium is usually given by another route such as an oral paste, an enema with magnesium source or subcutaneous administration of a high-magnesium solution.

As a preventative strategy, late-pregnancy and early-lactating cows grazing lush early-growing cool season grasses should be fed a high -magnesium mineral supplement starting about 30-days prior to turnout and until soil temperatures remain consistently high and forage growth has slowed.

It is important cattle have a daily supply of high-magnesium mineral during this time, so check mineral feeders frequently. Cattle don't like the taste of magnesium sources and it must be mixed with molasses, grain, soybean meal or other palatable feed.

Grass tetany is a serious disease of cattle that can result in rapid death. It is important to know the situation, forage types and fertilization strategies most likely to be associated with grass tetany and to have a plan to prevent problems with appropriate mineral supplementation.



AI Overview

Grass tetany is a metabolic disorder in cattle caused by low magnesium levels in the blood, leading to severe neuromuscular symptoms like staggering, convulsions, and death.



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The importance of Standardised Testing in Accurate Genetic Evaluation:

Why Consistency Matters when calculating EBVs

[By Freek Botes, Melville Ferreira and Dr Ben Greyling, ARC National Beef Recording and Improvement Scheme]



Over the last couple of years, the beef breeding industry has seen a proliferation of private performance testing service providers for cattle breeders. This article aims to review the importance of standardised performance testing procedures all testing centres should adhere to, to ensure that the tests done and the data collected are scientifically reliable and will add value to the selection decisions every cattle breeder will make and that it will also be to the benefit of the national beef industry as a whole.

Why is Standardised Performance Testing Procedures Important?

The primary goal of all performance testing is to produce **Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs)**. To understand why standardised performance testing procedures matter, it is essential to first revisit the concept of EBVs.

An Estimated Breeding Value (EBV) is a prediction of an animal's genetic potential to pass on desirable traits to its offspring. EBVs are calculated using performance records, pedigree data, more recently also including genomic information. These values are generated through Best Linear Unbiased Prediction (BLUP) models. These models separate genetic influences from environmental factors to provide a more accurate measure of an animal's breeding potential. The higher the accuracy of EBVs, the more reliable they are in predicting an animal's genetic contribution to the next generation.

This brings us to an important point—**adhering to standardised test procedures when collecting data for EBVs is crucial for ensuring the accuracy, reliability, and comparability of genetic evaluations**. The reason is that standardised test procedures in animal performance recording are aimed at identifying and controlling – as far as possible – environmental (non-genetic) effects that may have influenced the performance of a specific animal. Which

brings us to the principle and aims of constituting contemporary groups.

A very important contributing factor in collecting accurate data for EBVs is in fact the use and constitution of contemporary groups. Contemporary groups play a crucial role in beef performance testing by providing a **standardized framework** for evaluating the genetic and environmental influences on cattle performance including growth and development.

A contemporary group can be defined as:

- a group of animals born in the same year/season (similar age range)
- a group kept at the same location (same herd or farm)
- a group of the same sex
- a group managed alike from birth to the time of measurement (same feeding regime, same date of measurement, etc.)

In general, guidelines on contemporary groups are aimed at ensuring that any contemporary group is defined in such a way that the most significant environmental effects are the same for all animals within a particular group. Properly defined contemporary groups (combined with good genetic links between groups) very importantly, will ensure that BLUP can effectively separate genetic and environmental effects within any particular group. **Ultimately, the use of contemporary groups in performance testing is essential for advancing beef production efficiency and sustainability.**

In the following table the Importance of Standardised Performance Testing Procedures are discussed.

Table1: the Importance of Standardised Performance Testing Procedures

Objectives of standardisation	Detailed effects and benefits of standardisation
Ensures Data Accuracy and Consistency	- Standardised test procedures ensure that all animals are evaluated under the same conditions, minimising errors and biases in data collection. - Uniform measurements help maintain consistency across different herds and environments.
Eliminates Environmental Bias	- Environmental factors such as feed quality, housing, and management can influence an animal's performance. - Fixed test procedures minimize the impact of these external factors, ensuring that EBVs reflect genetic merit rather than environmental influences. See discussion of contemporary groups above.
Enhances Comparability Across Animals	- Inconsistent data collection leads to unreliable comparisons between animals. - Standardised procedures ensure that EBVs accurately reflect genetic differences rather than variations caused by inconsistent testing conditions.
Improves the Accuracy of Genetic Evaluations	- EBVs are calculated using complex statistical models that rely on high-quality, standardised data. - Inconsistent or biased data can lead to inaccurate EBVs, resulting in misleading breeding decisions.
Increases Repeatability and Reliability	- Standardised procedures allow for repeatable and reliable measurements over time and across different locations. - This consistency is essential for monitoring genetic progress and making informed long-term breeding decisions.
Facilitates Fair Ranking of Animals	- Without standardised test conditions, some animals may be unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged. - Standardised test procedures ensure fair and objective comparisons among animals, enabling breeders to select the best genetics.
Supports Industry-Wide Genetic Improvement	- Standardised data collection methods help build large, reliable datasets for national and international genetic evaluations. - This benefits the entire cattle industry by improving the accuracy of genetic predictions and enhancing breeding progress.
Prevents Misleading Selection Decisions	- Unreliable data result in breeders selecting animals based on false genetic superiority, negatively impacting herd performance and impeding genetic progress. - Fixed test procedures reduce selection errors, ensuring that only animals with true genetic potential are chosen.

Does Genomics Replace Performance Testing?

Some argue that standardised performance testing procedures are no longer necessary due to advancements in beef genomics, which supposedly eliminate environmental factors. However, while genomic data provides valuable insights into an animal's genetic potential, **it does not account for environmental influences such as nutrition, climate, health, and management practices—all of which significantly impact actual performance.** Genomic data alone cannot fully capture environmental effects; therefore, performance testing provides the **real-world data** needed to measure how these factors interact with genetics, refining the accuracy of **genomic-enhanced breeding values (GEBVs)**.

By continuously collecting and analysing performance records, breeders ensure that genomic predictions remain

reliable and applicable to evolving production conditions. This ultimately leads to better-informed selection decisions and sustained genetic improvement in beef cattle.

Conclusion

Standardised performance test procedures remain essential for collecting reliable, unbiased, and comparable data for EBV calculations. They ensure that **breeding decisions are based on true genetic merit rather than environmental influences**, leading to more efficient genetic improvement, increased productivity, and long-term success in cattle breeding. Cattle breeders should continue performance testing even when using beef genomics, as both sources of information complement each other for more accurate genetic evaluations.



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POTCHEFSTROOM, NOORDWES

Die belangrikheid van Gestandaardiseerde Toetsing in akkurate genetiese evaluering: Waarom konsekwentheid belangrik is by die berekening van teelwaardes



(Freek Botes, Melville Ferreira en Dr Ben Greyling, LNR, Nasionale Vleisbeesaantekening en -verbeteringskema)

Oor die afgelope paar jaar het die vleisbeestelingbedryf 'n toename in private prestasietoetsingsdiensverskaffers vir beestelers beleef. Hierdie artikel het ten doel om die belangrikheid van gestandaardiseerde prestasietoetsprosedures te beklemtoon waaraan alle toetssentrums moet voldoen, om te verseker dat die toetse wat gedoen word en die data wat ingesamel word wetenskaplik betroubaar is en waarde sal toevoeg tot die seleksiebesluite wat elke beesteler sal neem en dat dit ook tot voordeel van die nasionale vleisbeesbedryf as geheel sal wees.

Waarom is gestandaardiseerde prestasietoetsprosedures belangrik?

Die primêre doel van alle prestasietoetsing is om Beraamde Teelwaardes (EBV's) te bereken. Om te verstaan waarom gestandaardiseerde prestasietoetsprosedures saak maak, is dit noodsaaklik om eers die konsep van teelwaardes te hersien.

'n Beraamde Teelwaarde (EBV) is 'n voorspelling van 'n dier se genetiese potensiaal om gewenste eienskappe aan sy nageslag oor te dra. EBV's word bereken deur prestasierekords, stamboomdata, en meer onlangs ook genomiese inligting in te sluit. Hierdie waardes word gegenereer deur Best Linear Unbiased Prediction (BLUP) modelle. Hierdie modelle skei genetiese invloede van omgewingsfaktore om 'n meer akkurate maatstaf van 'n dier se teelpotensiaal te verskaf. Hoe hoër die akkuraatheid van teelwaardes is, hoe meer betroubaar is hulle in die voorspelling van 'n dier se genetiese bydrae tot die volgende generasie.

Dit bring ons by 'n belangrike punt - **die nakoming van gestandaardiseerde toetsprosedures wanneer data vir EBV's versamel word, is noodsaaklik om die akkuraatheid, betroubaarheid en vergelykbaarheid van genetiese evaluasies te verseker.** Die rede is dat gestandaardiseerde toetsprosedures in diereprestasi-aantekening daarop gemik is om – so ver moontlik –

omgewings- (nie-genetiese) effekte wat die prestasie van 'n spesifieke dier beïnvloed het, te identifiseer en te beheer. Dit bring ons by die beginsel en doelstellings van die konstituerende van kontemporêre (eitydse) groepe.

'n Baie belangrike bydraende faktor in die insameling van akkurate data vir teelwaardes is in werklikheid die gebruik en samestelling van kontemporêre groepe. Kontemporêre groepe speel 'n deurslaggewende rol in beesvleisprestasietoetsing deur 'n **gestandaardiseerde raamwerk** te verskaf vir die evaluering van die genetiese en omgewingsinvloede op beesprestasie, insluitend groei en ontwikkeling.

'n Kontemporêre groep kan gedefinieer word as:

- 'n groep diere wat in dieselfde jaar/seisoen gebore is (dieselfde ouderdomsgroep)
- 'n groep wat op dieselfde plek aangehou word (dieselfde kudde of plaas)
- 'n groep van dieselfde geslag
- 'n groep wat vanaf geboorte tot die tyd van meting dieselfde bestuur word (dieselfde voedingsstelsel, dieselfde datum van meting, ens.)

Oor die algemeen is riglyne oor kontemporêre groepe daarop gemik om te verseker dat enige kontemporêre groep so gedefinieer word dat die mees betekenisvolle omgewingseffekte dieselfde is vir alle diere binne 'n bepaalde groep. Dit is baie belangrik om te weet dat behoorlik gedefinieerde kontemporêre groepe (gekombineer met goeie genetiese skakels tussen groepe), sal verseker dat BLUP effektief genetiese en omgewingseffekte binne enige spesifieke groep kan skei. **Uiteindelik is die gebruik van kontemporêre groepe in prestasietoetsing noodsaaklik vir die bevordering van doeltreffendheid en volhoubaarheid van beesvleisproduksie.**

In die volgende tabel word die belangrikheid van gestandaardiseerde prestasietoetsprosedures bespreek.

Tabel 1: Die belangrikheid van gestandaardiseerde prestasietoetsprosedures

Doelwitte van standaardisering	Gevolge en voordele van Standaardisering
Verseker data-akkuraatheid en -konsekwenheid	- Gestandaardiseerde toetsprosedures verseker dat alle diere onder dieselfde toestande geëvalueer word, wat foute en vooroordele in data-insameling tot die minimum beperk. - Eenvormige metings help om konsekwenheid oor verskillende kuddes en omgewings te handhaaf.
Elimineer omgewingsvooroordeel	- Omgewingsfaktore soos voerkwaliteit, behuising en bestuur kan 'n dier se prestasie beïnvloed. - Vaste toetsprosedures minimaliseer die impak van eksterne faktore wat verseker dat teelwaardes genetiese meriete eerder as omgewingsinvloede weerspieël. Sien bespreking van kontemporêre groepe hierbo.
Verbeter vergelykbaarheid tussen diere	- Die nie-konsekwenste insameling van data lei tot onbetroubare vergelykings tussen diere. - Gestandaardiseerde prosedures verseker dat teelwaardes genetiese verskille akkuraat weerspieël eerder as variasies wat veroorsaak word deur nie-konsekwenste toetstoestande.
Verbeter die akkuraatheid van genetiese evaluasies	- EBV's word bereken met behulp van komplekse statistiese modelle wat staatmaak op hoë kwaliteit, gestandaardiseerde data. - Nie-konsekwenste of bevooroordeelde data kan lei tot onakkurate teelwaardes, wat lei tot misleidende teelbesluite.
Verhoog herhaalbaarheid en betroubaarheid	- Gestandaardiseerde prosedures maak voorsiening vir herhaalbare en betroubare metings oor tyd en oor verskillende liggings. - Hierdie konsekwenheid is noodsaaklik vir die monitering van genetiese vordering en die neem van ingeligte langtermyn teelbesluite.
Fasiliteer billike ranglys van diere	- Sonder gestandaardiseerde toetstoestande kan sommige diere onregverdig bevoordeel of benadeel word. - Gestandaardiseerde toetsprosedures verseker regverdige en objektiewe vergelykings tussen diere, wat telers in staat stel om die beste genetika te selekteer.
Ondersteun industrie-wye genetiese verbetering	- Gestandaardiseerde data-insamelingsmetodes help om groot, betroubare datastelle vir nasionale en internasionale genetiese evaluasies saam te stel. - Dit bevoordeel die hele beesbedryf deur die akkuraatheid van genetiese voorspellings te verbeter en vordering in teling verbeter.
Voorkom misleidende seleksiebesluite	- Onbetroubare data lei daartoe dat telers diere selekteer op grond van valse genetiese meerderwaardigheid, wat kuddeprestasie negatief beïnvloed en genetiese vordering belemmer. - Gestandaardiseerde toetsprosedures verminder seleksiefoute, wat verseker dat slegs diere met ware genetiese potensiaal geselekteer word.

Vervang Genomika prestasietoetsing?

Sommiges argumenteer dat gestandaardiseerde prestasietoetsprosedures nie meer nodig is nie as gevolg van die vooruitgang in vleisbeesgenomika, wat kwansuis omgewingsfaktore uitskakel. Alhoewel genomiese data waardevolle inligting t.o.v. 'n dier se genetiese potensiaal verskaf, **hou dit nie rekening met omgewingsinvloede soos voeding, klimaat, gesondheid en bestuurspraktyke nie - wat alles 'n aansienlike impak op werklike prestasie het.** Genomiese data alleen kan nie omgewingseffekte ten volle vasvang nie; daarom verskaf prestasietoetsing die werklike data wat nodig is om te meet en hoe hierdie faktore met genetika in wisselwerking tree, wat die akkuraatheid van **genomies-verbeterde teelwaardes (GEBVs) verbeter.**

Deur voortdurend prestasierekords in te samel en te ontleed, verseker telers dat genomiese voorspellings betroubaar bly en

van toepassing is op ontwikkelende produksietoestande. Dit lei uiteindelik tot beter ingeligte seleksiebesluite en volgehoue genetiese verbetering by vleisbeeste.

Gevolgtrekking

Gestandaardiseerde prestasietoetsprosedures bly noodsaaklik vir die insameling van betroubare, onbevooroordeelde en vergelykbare data vir EBV-berekeninge. Dit verseker dat teelbesluite gebaseer word op ware genetiese meriete eerder as omgewingsinvloede, wat lei tot meer doeltreffende genetiese verbetering, verhoogde produktiwiteit en langtermyn sukses in beesteling. Beestelers moet voortgaan met prestasietoetsing, selfs wanneer hulle van bees-genomika gebruik maak, aangesien beide bronne van inligting mekaar aanvul vir meer akkurate genetiese evaluasies.

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KZN ANGUS BREEDERS

How foot and leg scoring shapes longevity and profitability in Angus herds

Maclaine Shults-Mauney - Red Angus Magazine,  March 2025

In Angus herds, foot and leg soundness ranks amongst the most critical – yet sometimes overlooked – factors influencing cattle performance and longevity. Healthy, well-structured feet and legs enable animals to travel for feed and water, breed efficiently and maintain body condition throughout the year.

When structural issues arise, the consequences can ripple through an operation, triggering higher veterinary costs, early culling and diminished productivity.

Mitchell Van derWal (an undergraduate student in the US) and field specialist for the Red Angus Association in a foot and leg project, has gained valuable insight into the significance of this practice. Travelling to ranches in the Midwest, VanderWal collects data on key structural traits; claw shape, foot angle and hock angle. Ultimately, these phenotypic readings will assist in creating EPDs for foot and leg soundness, which can help pave the way for more informed culling and breeding decisions.

Producers can increase herd longevity and profitability by learning how to intergrade foot and leg scoring into their operations and exploring how genetics, management and the environment collectively shape the lower skeletal structure of cattle.

Laying the Groundwork for Soundness

The starting point for evaluating foot and leg integrity often begins with the basics: cattle rely on steady locomotion to eat, grow and reproduce. If a cow or bull struggles to walk, it can compromise weight gain, fertility and even survival in rugged or variable conditions. According to VanderWal, foot and leg scoring offers a tangible way to detect structural strengths and weakness before they escalate.

According to VanderWal, if cattle can't walk effectively, that's a big problem. Scoring helps pinpoint structural strengths and weaknesses so producers can select animals that will hold up over time.

Impact on Longevity

Sound foot and leg structure correlates directly with both longevity and productivity. Animals that maintain a healthy stride typically remain in the herd longer, reducing replacement costs.

This concept becomes especially critical for bull buyers. If a bull can't effectively travel to breed cows, pregnancy rates drop, significantly affecting an operation's bottom line – particularly in today's competitive market. Over time, multiple structural problems can undercut overall profitability making foot and leg scoring a valuable safeguard for the entire herd.

Influence on Bull Purchasing

For all buy buyers, structural soundness is pivotal. VanderWal noted that a bull's hock angle, claw shape and pastern strength all determine how well he can handle breeding demands. In areas with challenging terrain – muddy feedlots, rocky fields or steep hills – soundness often becomes the deciding factor for a bull's effectiveness. According to VanderWal, bulls rely heavily on their hocks for overall flexibility. A bull with poor conformation might struggle to breed effectively, which can result in fewer calves on the ground and a weaker bottom line.

Covering cows and producing functional offspring is a bull's primary purpose – and structural integrity is vital in carrying out that role across multiple generations. Sound bulls lay the groundwork for profitable herds. When shopping for a new sire, producers should remember a bull's foot and leg structure is more than a detail – it's a deciding factor in long-term success.

Breaking down the Scoring System

Though breed associations and industry experts vary slightly in their guidelines, foot and leg scoring generally focus on three core traits:

Foot and leg Scoring Reference

CLAW SHAPE Reference: Shape (primarily curl) and unevenness of the claw set.



1. Claw Shape

Ideal: Toes point forward and are neither excessively splayed nor overlapping

Concerns: Splayed (toes spread widely apart) or scissor claws (overlapping toes) create uneven weight distribution, leading to discomfort or lameness.

FOOT ANGLE Reference: Strength of pastern, depth of heel and length of foot



2. Foot Angle

Ideal: A pastern that's flexible but not too upright, enable a normal stride.

Concerns: A shallow, laid-back pastern can cause animals to walk on the back of the hoof, while an overly upright pastern may reduce mobility and stride length.

REAR LEG SIDE VIEW Reference: Angle measured at the front of the hock.



3. Hock Angle

Ideal: Enough angle to allow fluid movement without overly bending the legs beneath the body.

Concerns: A post-legged (very straight) hock restricts mobility and a sickle-hocked (overly bent) leg can strain joints and reduce stride efficiency.

According to VanderWal, you always start from the ground up, claws pointed forward, a suitably flexible pastern and a hock angle that promotes a fluid, comfortable stride are hallmarks of sound cattle.



Connecting Phenotype to EPDs

In this project, VanderWal travelled to participating ranches, scoring and recording cattle on claw shape, foot angle and hock angle. These phenotypic assessments are paired with genetic information to eventually create a comprehensive genetic evaluation of foot and leg traits.

In the US, standalone EPD for foot and leg soundness is still in development, standardizing the way producers collect and submit data is critical. Over time guidelines, along with scoring references will help to unify these efforts.

VanderWal explains that phenotypical readings need to be matched to genomic markers to build forward an EPD that will allow producers to target foot and leg soundness in their herds, much like they do for growth or carcass traits.

Practical Tips for Collecting Foot and Leg Scores

Until a standalone EPD becomes available, producers can still take a proactive, independent approach to improving herd soundness, especially when it comes to purchasing new bulls.

1. Choose the Right Environment

Scoring is most accurate when cattle stand naturally on solid ground. Mud, ice or rocky terrain can alter animal's stance, making it difficult to gauge true claw shape or foot angle. If possible, evaluate cattle in a quiet, dry pen – concrete or firm dirt works best.

2. Score at the Right Age

Producers usually target animals between 270 days and 500 days of age (shortly after weaning but before sale season). Assessing the entire contemporary group at once provide a consistent snapshot of structural differences and ensures comparisons amongst similarly raised cattle.

3. Evaluate Consistently

Accurate scoring relies on a standardized scoring guide, e.g. the RAAA's foot and leg chart. Practice is essential. It takes time to develop one's eye and build a clear mental picture of what each score looks like.

4. Maintain Detailed Records

Use a notebook, spreadsheet or herd management software to record and track scores. Claw shape can shift over time – especially in mature cows exposed to varied conditions – so comparing year-to-year data can help detect developing structural problems.

Genetics and Selective Breeding

While environmental and management undoubtedly influence foot and leg health, genetics also play a pivotal role. Many structural traits have a moderate level of heritability and selective breeding can help correct weaknesses.

VanderWal explains that a valuable female with slightly straighter structure can be bred with a bull known for added



flex in the pastern and hock to balance the calf. Over generations a herd can move closer to that ideal midpoint.

Environmental and Management Factors

The old adage “You are what you eat” holds true for cattle as well. What producers feed their animals directly affects phenotype, underscoring the importance of a comprehensive nutrition plan. Coupled with a stable environment, these factors are crucial for developing structurally sound animals. Feeding high-energy rations can lead to faster hoof growth, occasionally requiring trimming to prevent lameness. A more moderate nutrition plan often helps maintain natural hoof shape and avoids pushing heifers or bulls to hard, too fast.

If cattle are raised on pasture, excessive mud and moist can cause animals to stand with their weight shifted onto their heels, potentially interfering with normal hoof wear. In drier climates, hooves may wear more evenly, though extremely firm ground can place stress on joints. In both scenarios, foot and leg scoring can highlight the impact of environmental conditions and help producers adapt their management strategies.

Cattle raised in controlled environments like dry lots or feeding yards should, in theory, be easier to score. However, facility design can help or hinder producer efforts. Having a clear, unobstructive view of each animal's stance is key.

When considering pen surfaces – concrete or dirt – producers should note while concrete may promote even hoof wear, it can also accumulate manure quickly and become slick in wet conditions which may lead to injury. Dirt may be less prone to slick spots but still needs regular upkeep to maintain safe and functional conditions.

Pen size matters too. Overcrowding can force cattle into unnatural stances, which can result in skewed scores. Seasonality is another factor to consider. Freezing temperatures can cause animals to stand tensely, which can mask or exaggerate structural issues.

By keeping these factors in mind, producers are better equipped to get an accurate read on foot and leg soundness.

Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

According to VanderWal, it's best to avoid scoring in muddy, icy or cramped pens. More accurate results can be achieved by observing animals on even surfaces, with enough space for cattle to stand comfortably.

He advises scoring animals at similar ages and life stages to ensure accurate comparisons, which can reveal both top performers and those needing closer scrutiny. A minor toe-out, for example, may worsen over time, so keeping consistent records can guide culling or selection decisions. Annual scoring also helps spot early structural decline. If multiple

cattle display poor foot and leg health or unusual posture, it may point to environmental issues – such as inadequate drainage – as the underlying cause.

Scoring's Role in Culling and Breeding

Foot and leg scores can guide culling decisions, especially when selecting replacement heifers. A yearling that already shows compromised structure may not perform well in strenuous pasture conditions, especially if fertility and performance traits are merely average.

A bull's role in shaping the calf crop is immense. For operations in areas with steep or rocky terrain, a bull with sturdy pasterns and ideal claw shape can produce offspring capable of travelling confidently. Even in flat or moderate environments, the foundational need for robust foot and leg structure remains.

According to VanderWal, no trait can compensate for a bull's feet and legs not holding up. It is often the difference between a bull that breeds effectively for multiple seasons and one that yields poor conception rates or requires early culling.

Maintaining year-to-year record of foot and leg scores in addition to fertility, weight and other metrics, allows producers to spot patterns. By pairing the data with pedigree or genomic results, breeders can identify the soundest source and phase out bloodlines prone to problems.

Stepping Forward

Even though a formal EPD for foot and leg structure is still in the works for Red Angus producers (in the US), VanderWal remains optimistic about the future. With unified data collection and expanded genomic testing, these scores could one day appear in sale catalogs alongside weaning weights and marbling EPDs.

“Eventually, we hope producers can look at a bull's feet and leg EPD with the same confidence they have in birthweight EPDs,” VanderWal noted. “Until that happens, consistent scoring remains our best tool.”

Foot and leg scoring goes beyond a simple checklist; it's a proactive measure essential for safeguarding the health, productivity and longevity. By systematically assessing key structural traits – claw shape, foot angle and hock angle – producers gain the insights needed to make culling and breeding decisions. Over time, those cumulative improvements yield a herd primed for maximum mobility, efficient weight gain and overall durability.

The secret lies in consistent practice and clear goals. By developing a keen eye for structural soundness, maintaining thorough records and adapting management strategies as needed, producers will see rewards that extend well beyond the sale ring. It all begins, quite literally, from the ground up.

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Timing Breeding Season

Should heifers be bred to calve before the mature herd?

Bob Larson, Kansas State University – Angus Journal  March 2025

First-calf heifers that become pregnant early in the breeding season for their second pregnancy have greater lifetime productivity and longevity than those who don't become pregnant until later in the breeding season. Because a year lasts 365 days and pregnancy lasts about 285 days, cattle must become pregnant within 80 days after calving in order to maintain a 365-day interval between calvings.

Although a high percentage of adult cows in good body condition are expected to resume fertile cycles within 80 days after calving, the length of post calving infertility in first-calf heifers is often longer than mature cows in the same herd.

Therefore, many producers prefer to breed heifers to calve several weeks before the mature cows begin their calving season.

Studies have indicated heifers that calved early produced greater lifetime calf weaning due to being more likely to remain in the herd and the fact that their calves are older at weaning compared to heifers that conceived later in their first breeding season. Many studies support the importance of selecting bred replacement heifers that will calve over a short calving season that either starts before the start of the mature cow season or that is confined to the first few weeks of the mature cow calving season.

In order for first-calf heifers to give birth to their first calf at about 22 to 23 months of age so they have 90 to 100 days between calving and start of the next breeding season, they must become pregnant by 12 ½ to 13 ½ months of age. Fortunately, the average age at which beef heifers reach puberty should allow producers to select and manage heifers that can become pregnant in a breeding season that starts ahead of the mature cow breeding season.

Even though there are benefits to calving heifers earlier than mature cows, it is important to recognize this strategy will increase the length of the calving season, it requires heifers reach puberty at an early age and the strategy may not be beneficial if the herd experiences bull fertility or nutrition challenges. A careful evaluation of each herd's expected length of post calving infertility in both first-calf heifers and mature cows, age when a high percentage of replacement heifers reach puberty, and the costs associated with moving heifer breeding earlier than mature cow breeding allows producers to make the best decision for their situation.

One study evaluated the effects of breeding heifers to calve zero to six weeks earlier than mature cows and found that if the length of the period of fertility following calving for first-calf heifers is 80 days or longer, breeding heifers to calve ahead of the mature herd resulted in: more cows pregnant in the first 21 days of breeding, more cows pregnant in a 60-day breeding season and greater total weaning weight. Interestingly breeding heifers to calve three weeks ahead of the cows resulted in nearly as much benefit as a heifer breeding season that began six weeks ahead of the mature cows.

By knowing an individual herd's reproductive characteristics, the ideal length of time to start the heifer season ahead of the mature cows' can be optimized to capture reproductive benefits while minimizing costs.

Photo: Anton Vermaak

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BENEFICIAL

7AN880 SAV BENEFICIAL 4253

Beneficial is a 2025 Schaff Angus Valley Sale feature from a President dam that is an eighth-generation donor at SAV.

His dam is long-bodied, deep and equipped with a well-attached udder. Three other sons have been SAV Sale features.

From his Angus character to a big hip, Beneficial only gets better when you get him on dirt and look at his impeccable feet.

One of the most pursued bulls of the 2025 spring sale season for all the right reasons. He is as good as his picture!

HOOVER NO DOUBT
SIRE BALDRIDGE BADGER
 BALDRIDGE ISABEL Y69
 SAV PRESIDENT 6847
DAM SAV MADAME PRIDE 9170
 SAV MADAME PRIDE 3256

Registration: 21069161 Birth Weight (BW): 80
 Tattoo: 4253 Weaning Weight (WW): 990
 Born: 06/03/2024 Yearling Weight (YW): 1450
 Yearling Scrotal (SC): 39

From: Schaff Angus Valley, ND and Palmer Angus, TX

Angus Sire Summary EPDs as of 30/01/26

Production													Maternal						Carcass					\$Value							
	CED	BW	WN	YW	RADG	DMI	YH	SC	DOC	Claw	Angle	HS	PAP	HP	CEM	Milk	MW	MH	\$EN	CW	Marb	RE	Fat	\$AxH	\$AxJ	\$M	\$W	\$F	\$G	\$B	\$C
EPD	8	1.5	76	139	0.29	1.72	0.4	1.48	31	0.34	0.35	0.59	0.75	13.4	10	24	77	0.6	-22	58	0.33	0.87	0.024	131	132	88	71	102	39	142	272
Acc	0.33	0.55	0.47	0.43	0.31	0.31	0.45	0.48	0.45	0.35	0.35	0.28	0.28	0.19	0.29	0.31	0.37	0.4		0.38	0.37	0.36	0.34								
% Rank	35	55	30	25	25	85	65	20	4	10	5	70	45	25	30	65	45	35	65	45	90	30	55	45	35	15	40	35	80	65	45



TOP SECRET

7AR116 MUSHRUSH TOP SECRET M126

A new and exciting addition to our Red Angus lineup. This calving ease prospect offers a great combination of excellent phenotype, balanced data and elite maternal value.

He provides an outcross mating option to many of the popular genetic lines in the Red Angus breed.

He is soft made with added muscle shape, lots of rib, length of body and excellent docility.

TOP SECRET had impressive individual ratios of 92 BW, 110 WW, 112 YW and 124 IMF.

He is backed by an incredibly solid and proven cow family and ranks near the top of the breed for all three of the Red Angus indexes.

BROWN CRSB 100 PROOF C5524
SIRE BROWN TOP TIER G242
 BROWN MS TRILOGY D723
 CALVO FORAGER S7E
DAM MUSHRUSH ANNIE H049
 BECKTON ANNIE B432 N

Registration: 4926528 Birth Weight (BW): 69
 Tattoo: M126 Weaning Weight (WW): 641
 Born: 02/03/2024 Yearling Weight (YW): 1159

From: Mushrush Red Angus

Red Angus Sire Summary as of 07/02/2025

	ProS	HB	GM	CE	BW	WW	YW	ADG	DMI	MM	ME	HPG	CEM	Stay	Marb	YG	CW	REA	BF
EPD	161	93	68	19	-4	72	126	0.34	1.46	32	7	12	11	21	0.7	0.22	28	0.01	0.06
Acc				45	50	49	49	49	33	21	15	25	40	34	40	33	41	39	35
% Rank	3	3	20	5	15	29	14	6	98	4	71	49	3	2	12	99	28	73	99



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HERE FOR YOU.

Advances in Electronic Estrous Detection Systems

Considering how to use new tools in your operation

Cliff Lamb, Texas A&M University - Angus Journal  March 2025

In beef cattle production systems, precision farming technologies are becoming increasingly important for improving efficiency and productivity. One such technology is electronic heat detection systems, which help beef producers monitor and identify when cows are in estrus (heat). These systems utilized sensors and data analytics to detect the onset of estrus in cows, thus enabling timely artificial insemination (AI) and improving overall pregnancy rates.

While these systems offer numerous advantages, they also come with certain drawbacks. Electronic estrous detection systems may be a valuable tool for beef cattle producers, offering a more accurate, efficient and reliable way to monitor the reproductive status of cows. Traditionally, estrous detection involves visual observation of signs such as mounting behavior and increased activity. However, as demands for more precise management increase, technology has stepped in to enhance estrous detection. Electronic estrous detection systems have become a valuable tool for beef cattle producers, offering an alternative to monitor the reproductive status of cows.

How do electronic estrous detection systems work?

Electronic estrus detection systems are designed to monitor a cow's activity and physiological changes in real time, providing accurate and timely alerts when a cow is in estrus.

These systems typically employ a combination of sensors, wearable devices and software to track behavioral and physical changes that signal the onset of estrus.

1. Wearable sensors: Most electronic estrous detection systems use wearable sensors that are fixed to the cow, usually in the form of a collar, ear tag or a pedometer-like device attached to the leg or ankle. These sensors are designed to measure activity levels, movement patterns and sometimes even temperature fluctuations, which can all be indicative of estrus.

a.) Activity monitoring: During estrus, cows experience an increase in activity. This includes more frequent

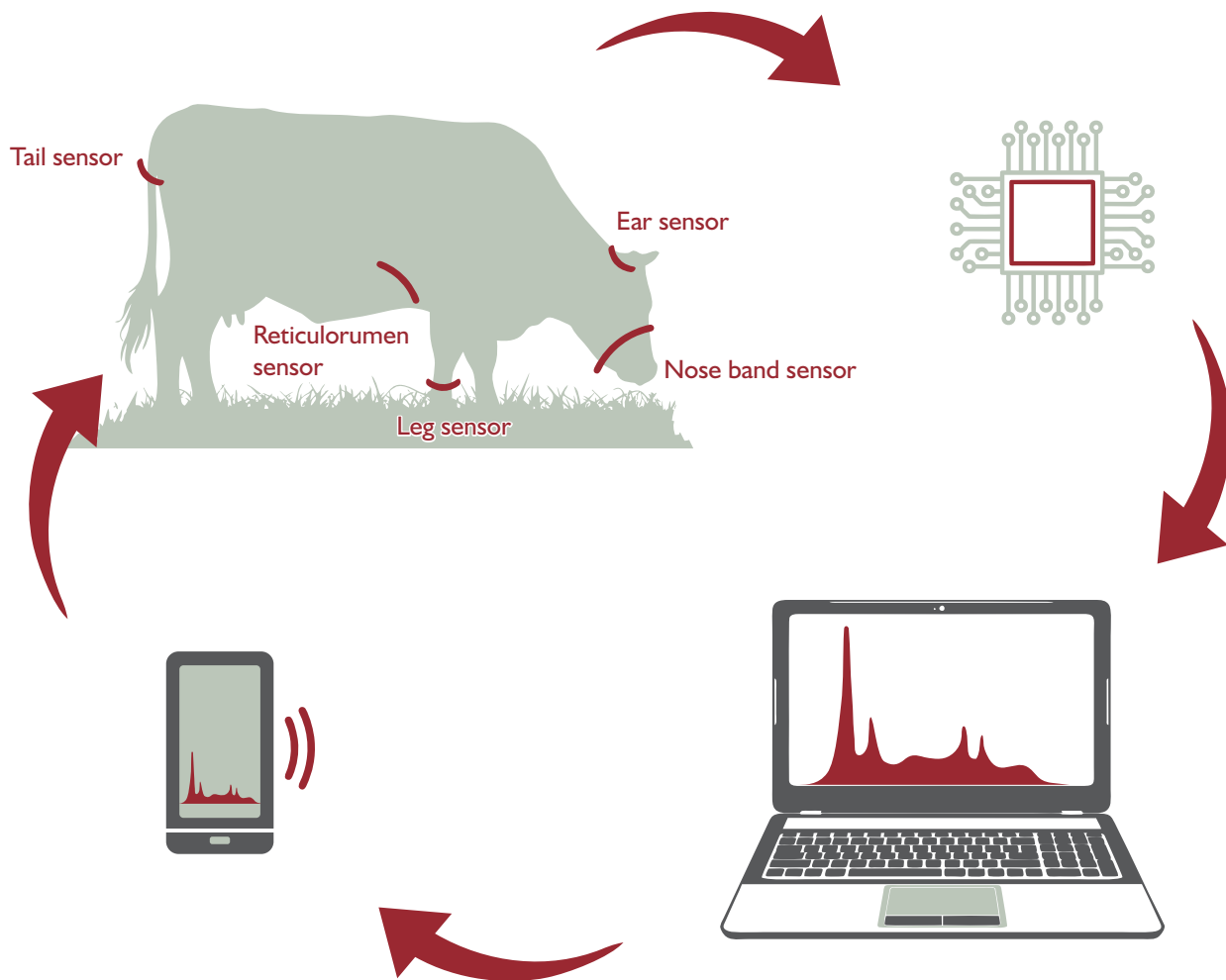
walking, mounting and general restlessness. Sensors can detect these activity spikes and relay this to the central system.

b.) Heating detection algorithms: The system employs sophisticated algorithms that analyze the movement data. These algorithms can differentiate between normal activity patterns and those associated with estrous behavior. For example, the system may identify a cow's increased movement at night or during specific times of day as a sign of estrus.

c.) Body temperature and hormonal changes: Some systems monitor temperature fluctuations or even measure hormonal changes. An increase in body temperature and changes in hormone levels is common during estrus, and these factors can be tracked using advanced sensors. For example, some systems are equipped with sensors that measure a cow's vaginal temperature, which rises during estrus.



2. Communication and alerts: Once the sensor detects signs of estrus, the data is transmitted to a central monitoring system, often through wireless communication technologies like Bluetooth, radio frequency identification (RFID) or even satellite-based systems. These systems can provide real-time alerts to farm managers or farmers via mobile apps, text messages or e-mail, notifying them that a cow is in estrus.



3. Integration with farm management software:

Electronic estrous detection systems are often integrated with farm management software, allowing farmers to track individual cow performance and reproductive history. The software may log data on the timing of estrous events, AI procedures and pregnancy checks. This information helps optimize breeding schedules, improves the overall fertility management of the herd and reduces the chances of missed breeding opportunities.

Advantages

The use of electronic estrous detection systems offers several key benefits that can significantly improve the reproductive efficiency of beef cattle operations, such as increased accuracy, timeliness and labor efficiency; reduced human error; real-time monitoring, all resulting in improved management of fertility.

Challenges and considerations

Despite their many advantages, electronic estrous detection systems also come with a few challenges.

The initial cost of purchasing and installing the necessary

equipment can be significant, especially for smaller operations. Additionally, technology integration may require a learning curve, and some systems may have limitations in terms of coverage or sensor accuracy in certain environments. In addition, there is a need for regular maintenances and battery changes for wearable devices. If a sensor malfunctions or runs out of battery, it could lead to gaps in monitoring and missed estrous events.

Electronic estrous detection systems are an evolving agricultural technological innovation that represents a significant advancement in the field of cattle management. By leveraging wearable technology, real-time data collection and sophisticated algorithms, these systems offer improved accuracy, efficiency and productivity for beef cattle producers.

While there are challenges related to initial cost and maintenance, the benefits of such systems in terms of reproductive efficiency and herd management make them a valuable tool for modern farming operations.

As technology continues to evolve, electronic estrous detection systems will likely become even more integral to successful cattle breeding programs.



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Turning Crop Residues into **VALUABLE FEED**

By Bob Larson, Kansas State University - **Angus Journal**  October 2023 (adapted version)

Crop residues from corn, milo, soybeans, potatoes, and sugar beets can be a valuable feed source for beef herds. Whether residues are grazed directly or harvested and baled, several important factors must be considered to ensure cattle health and optimal use of the feed resource.

Water Availability and Environmental Challenges

One commonly overlooked issue when grazing crop residues is **inadequate water access**. Problems such as limited drinking space, low flow rates, insufficient storage capacity, or an unfamiliar water source can discourage consumption. Reduced water intake can quickly lead to lower feed intake, poor performance, and even health problems.

Weather can also pose challenges. Heavy snow or ice can make residue grazing impossible, so producers should maintain an **emergency forage reserve** to feed cattle when field access is lost.

Nutrient Differences Among Crop Residues

Nutritional value varies widely among crop residues. Soybean residue, for instance, provides very little energy or protein once the remaining beans have been consumed. In contrast, corn and milo fields produce a significant amount of usable forage—approximately **50 pounds of residue per bushel of corn harvested**.

Cattle prefer the more palatable and nutritious plant parts—downed ears, leaves, and husks—while typically avoiding stalks and cobs until later. Because of this selective grazing, cows generally consume only about **20–25% of the available residue**, meaning a cornfield yielding 120 bushels per acre can offer roughly **40 or more days of grazing per acre**.

Managing Nutrition Over Time

As cattle graze, they first consume the highest-quality portions of the crop residue. Consequently, the **energy and protein content of the remaining feed decreases over time**. To maintain body condition, supplemental feeding may become necessary—especially to provide **adequate protein**, which supports appetite and forage digestibility.

When supplementation is required, it's often most efficient to **feed supplements directly in the residue field**. This practice allows cattle to continue utilizing remaining residue while reducing manure hauling and labor.

Watch for Nitrate Toxicity

A key risk when grazing residue from corn, sorghum, and similar crops is **nitrate toxicity**. Although all plants contain some nitrate, certain conditions can cause dangerous accumulation. Young plants naturally contain higher nitrate levels, but even mature plants may accumulate excessive nitrates when stressed by **drought, frost, hail, or disease**. Producers should test suspect forages before grazing or feeding to prevent losses.

Balancing Benefits and Risks

While challenges such as fencing, water supply, snow or ice cover, and nitrate risks must be managed, **grazing crop residues offers significant advantages**. This practice can reduce winter feed costs for cattle producers and help crop farmers by efficiently utilizing post-harvest residue. With careful planning and monitoring, crop residue grazing can be a win-win for both livestock and crop operations.





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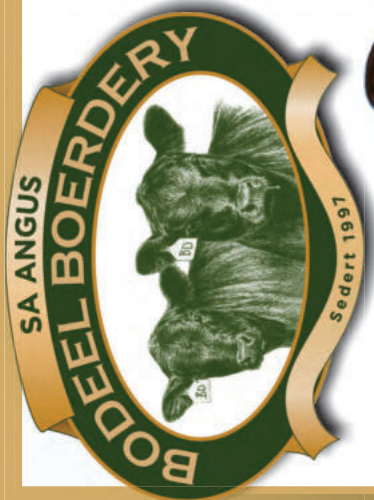
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Bodeel.botha@outlook.com | Viljoenskroon



WORLD ANGUS FORUM

Australia

Report Prepared by: Danie Dames

Date: July 2025

1. Introduction

I am sincerely grateful to the Angus Society of South Africa for the opportunity to attend the World Angus Forum 2025. The experience was both educational and inspiring, offering a wealth of international insights and connections that will serve the South African Angus community well into the future.

2. Pre-Tour Activities

The forum began with a scenic harbour cruise in Sydney, Australia, which set the tone for an engaging and memorable journey. Throughout our travels, we interacted with fellow breeders and industry experts from across the globe, exchanging ideas and discussing emerging trends within the Angus sector.



3. Tour Highlights

Stud and Commercial Visits:

- Stud Farms: Karoo Angus, Millah Murrah Angus, Bald Blair Angus, Glenisa Angus
- Commercial Operations: Sunny Point Pastoral Co
- Feedlot: Rangers Valley Feedlot
- Event: Angus Expo in Tamworth



These visits offered diverse insights into breeding strategies, management systems, and feeding protocols. While Australian producers share many of the same genetics we use in South Africa, their breeding goals differ. For example, they focus on producing heavier calves (400–450 kg) for feedlots and are rewarded based on carcass quality under their grading system. In contrast, our emphasis remains on medium-framed animals.

4. Feedlot Insights – Rangers Valley

Overview:

- Size: 12,000 acres
- Staff: 55–60, including 12 pen riders
- Throughput: 1,200–1,500 cattle/week
- Capacity: 40,000 head

Feeding & Nutrition:

- Corn-based silage; 30% starter to 60% finishing grain mix
- On-site steam-flaking of wheat and barley
- 100 tonnes silage fed daily
- Rations tailored to feeding stage (9 variations)

Continues on p82



BORDERLAND

Angus



Mega Angus Veiling
29 Julie 2026





Performance Goals:

- Angus entry weight: 440–450 kg | Finish weight: ~840 kg
- Feed period: 250–270 days | Daily gain: 1.4 kg
- Mortality rate: 2%

Infrastructure & Welfare:

- Woodchip bedding (final 100 days) improves gain and comfort
- Gravel pens cleaned every 60 days
- Triple-tag animal ID system
- Comprehensive vaccination and health protocols

Sustainability:

- 50% of mill powered by solar energy
- Efficient water storage (3.3 ML)
- Strategic feed and silage stockpiling buffers costs and shortages

5. Angus Expo – Tamworth

At the Angus Expo, more than 500 animals were showcased, and we had the opportunity to network extensively with Australian breeders. Highlights included sampling premium Angus beef at a barbecue competition and learning about Australia's advanced meat grading system.

Australian Meat Grading System Overview:

- Carcass weight, marbling, ossification, fat depth, pH, tropical content
- MSA and AUS-MEAT protocols ensure consistent eating quality
- Emphasizes traceability, tenderness, and grading consistency

Key Insight: South Africa could benefit significantly by adopting a similar system. I think we as a society should put more emphasis on assisting roleplayers in trying to get a grading system implemented in South Africa.

6. World Angus Secretariat Meeting

This year, political reasons nearly saw South Africa excluded from the Secretariat. Scott Wright CEO of Angus Australia made contact with us to highlight the importance of our presence. Fortunately, I was able to represent South Africa and present an overview of our breed status.

Participating Countries Included:

- South Africa, USA, Canada, UK, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, New Zealand, and several European nations

Global Highlights:

- Australia: 60% of national herd is Angus or Angus-cross; 80% of Angus beef is exported
- USA: 1.23 billion lbs of Angus beef exported to 55+ countries
- Uruguay: Angus now comprises 55% of the national herd (up from 17% in 2007)
- Argentina: 75% of their 52 million cattle have Angus influence

Conclusion: The Angus breed has experienced significant global growth, largely driven by the adoption of grading systems in many countries that favour marbling and meat quality—traits in which Angus excels. These systems have given Angus a distinct advantage over other breeds, reinforcing its position as a premium beef choice worldwide."

7. Forum Sessions & Industry Insights

Key Topics Discussed:

1. Rise of Alternative Proteins:

- Demand driven by Gen Z and Millennials prioritizing sustainability and health
- Projected to surpass beef consumption by 2040
- Marketing opportunity: position Angus as a “real food” alternative to “ultra-processed” plant-based options.

2. Consumer Trends:

- Growing backlash against fake meats
- Movement toward “Ancestral Foods” (natural, whole-animal products)
- TikTok and social media influence perception and awareness

3. Nutritional Power of Beef:

- Superior bioavailability of essential amino acids
- Crucial role in addressing malnutrition and sarcopenia in vulnerable populations
- Health benefits are often overshadowed by environmental debates

4. Sustainability and Animal Welfare:

- Transparency and traceability increasingly influence consumer trust
- Animal welfare and “clean meat” certification could shift perception among flexitarian or former vegetarians

Continues on p84

ASTRO ANGUS

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Produksieveiling: 18 Augustus 2026



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Plaas Driefontein, Hendrina

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5. Methane Reduction & Genetics:

- Breeding for low methane without sacrificing productivity is possible
- New Zealand trials show promise in vaccines and genomic selection
- Feed composition can influence emissions, especially in grazing systems

6. Global Market Opportunity:

- Rising protein consumption in Asia, India, and Africa
- Red meat demand declining in traditional forms but growing in high-quality segments

8. Youth Engagement – A Global Priority

Angus associations around the world have placed significant emphasis on involving the next generation. Multiple youth programmes are actively running across various countries, aimed at equipping young people with the skills, knowledge, and passion needed to carry the breed forward.

This presents a major opportunity for South Africa. By establishing structured youth initiatives, we can inspire and empower the next generation of Angus breeders, ensuring long-term sustainability and continued growth of the breed. Investing in the youth is not just a nice-to-have—it is a strategic imperative for securing the future of Angus in South Africa.

9. Final Reflections

The World Angus Forum 2025 was a powerful reminder that Angus is not just a breed—it is a global brand backed by quality, innovation, and resilience. The exposure to world-class operations, evolving consumer demands, and global marketing strategies has reaffirmed the potential for South African Angus to stand proudly.

Key lessons from the forum emphasize the need for South Africa to:

- Adopt efficient production systems that improve animal performance while ensuring sustainability and profitability.
- Champion animal welfare and traceability as non-negotiable pillars of our value chain.
- Develop a standardized carcass grading system to reward quality and drive consistency in the marketplace.
- Tell the Angus story boldly—highlighting its nutritional benefits, environmental stewardship, and economic value.
- Investing in the youth is investing in the future. Their mindset, their way of interacting, and the innovative approaches they bring are fundamentally different from past generations. To ensure the continued growth and relevance of our industry, we must embrace these differences and adapt. Supporting and involving the youth today will build a stronger, more sustainable tomorrow.

As the beef industry faces mounting pressure from alternative proteins and shifting consumer expectations, Angus producers must take the lead in shaping a compelling, future-focused narrative. The global trend is clear: premium, ethically produced, nutrient-dense beef has a strong and growing market.

South African Angus is well-positioned—we have the genetics, the breeders, and the passion. Now, we must align our efforts, embrace innovation, and lead with confidence. The future of Angus is not just global—it is ours to define.

Angus Greetings

Danie Dames



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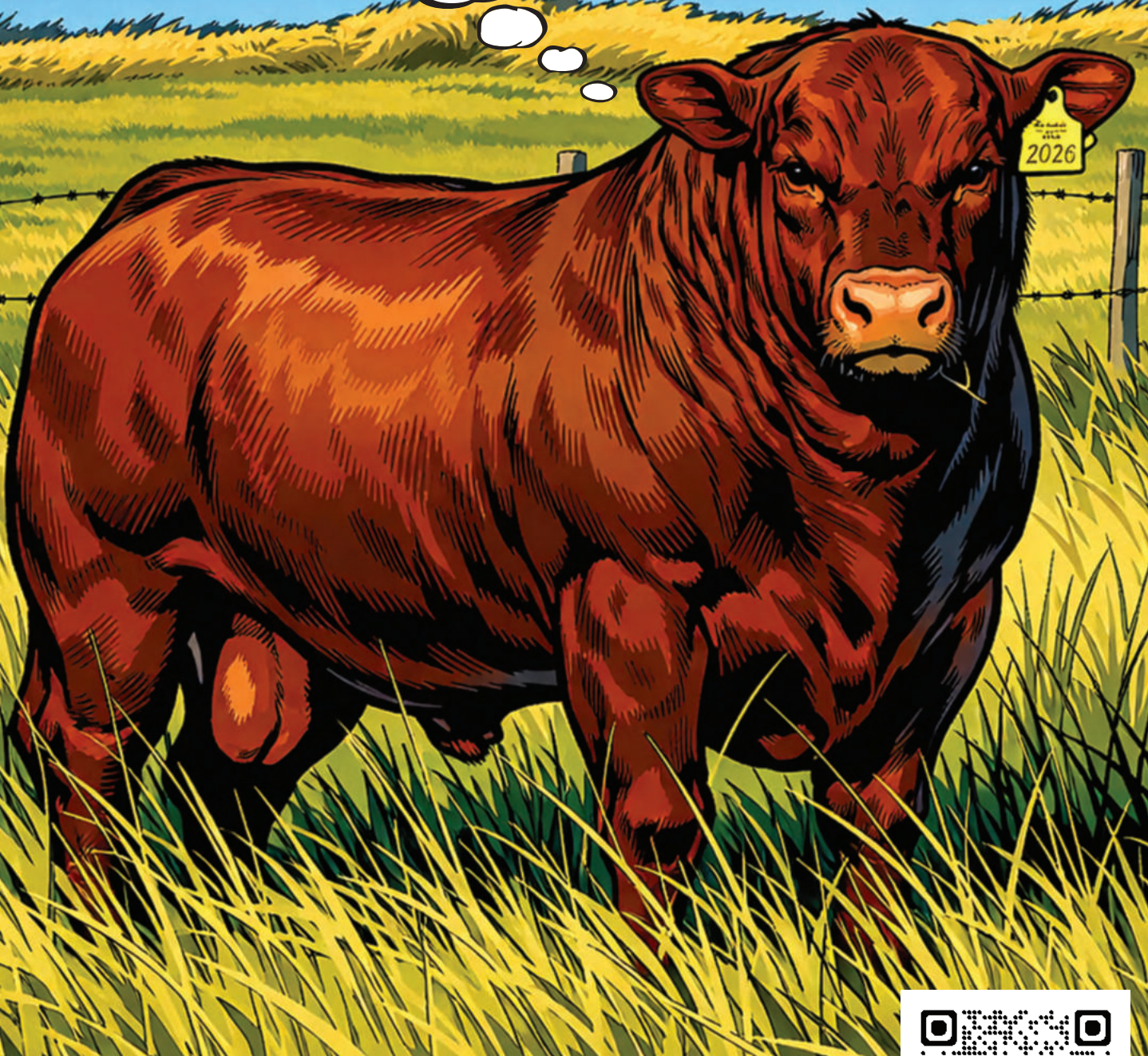


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Handling the Heat

Exploring management strategies and genetic tools to combat heat stress in cattle

By Megan Clark - Angus Journal  May 2025 (Adapted version)

Year after year, scorching summer temperatures bring challenges for both cattle and their caretakers. Heat stress not only affects animal comfort but can also slow productivity across the herd. Understanding and managing these effects can make a meaningful difference in herd performance and well-being.

Heating Up

Four major environmental factors influence heat stress: **temperature, humidity, wind speed, and solar radiation**, explains **A.J. Tarpoff**, associate professor and beef extension veterinarian at **Kansas State University**. Together, these factors — along with a cow's cumulative heat load — play a critical role in determining comfort and productivity.

“Cattle have an amazing ability to accumulate heat during the day, but they must be able to dissipate it at night,” Tarpoff says. “To do that effectively, they need about four to six hours of comfortable nighttime cooling.”

Without sufficient time to cool down, cattle start each day at a thermal disadvantage — a cycle that can quickly lead to behavioral and physiological problems.

“The consequences of heat stress really come from the coping behaviors cattle use to try to cool themselves,” Tarpoff explains. “When they're in their thermoneutral zone, they're most comfortable and productive. Once they move outside that zone, they shift behaviors to manage the heat.”

One of the most noticeable changes is **reduced dry matter intake**. As cattle work to cool themselves, appetite and feed efficiency decline. Animals may also crowd near water tanks — not necessarily drinking, but seeking relief from the heat.

“All of these behaviors are counterproductive,” Tarpoff says. “They're eating less, standing longer, and engaging in abnormal behaviors that ultimately hinder growth and performance.”

Cooling Down

Fortunately, managing these coping behaviors doesn't have to be complicated. Small, practical adjustments to daily management can significantly reduce heat stress.

“**Water is the most essential nutrient to life**, and it becomes even more critical in the summer months,” Tarpoff emphasizes.

As temperatures rise, water intake can **double**, so ensuring ample, clean, and cool water is always available is vital. “Whether that means adding tanks, increasing flow rates, or providing shaded or cooler sources, it's a critical piece of heat management,” he says.

Feed management is another important consideration. Because digestion generates heat, feeding during cooler parts of the day can reduce thermal load.

“Feeding later in the evening allows that heat of digestion to occur during overnight cooling, instead of compounding heat stress during the day,” Tarpoff suggests.

Environmental adjustments can also provide relief. Dirt pens, for instance, can absorb significant heat — reaching **140°F (60°C)** at midday. Using **bedding materials** can reflect sunlight and lower surface temperatures by up to 25°F.

“Shade’s a wonderful tool, too,” Tarpoff notes. “It’s an investment in animal well-being. Just make sure there’s enough space so all cattle can use it without crowding.”

Another tool often misunderstood is **sprinklers**. “Sprinklers should cool the pen surface at night, not soak cattle during the heat of the day,” Tarpoff clarifies. “Used correctly, they can make a big difference.”

A Genetic Approach

While simple management routines go a long way, producers can also take a **genetic approach** to reducing heat stress — especially within the **Angus breed**.

According to **Kelli Retallick-Riley**, president of **Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI)**, the **Hair Shedding (HS) Expected Progeny Difference (EPD)** is designed to help producers breed cattle that tolerate heat more effectively.

“Early-summer hair shed is a trait we began capturing not only for heat tolerance but also for resistance to fescue toxicosis,” Retallick-Riley explains.

Toxic fescue — a common pasture grass in the southeastern U.S. — can produce a fungus that reduces fertility and performance in cattle, much like heat stress. The HS EPD helps address both issues by identifying animals that shed their winter coats earlier and more completely, improving their ability to stay cool.

The scoring system is straightforward: cattle are rated from **1 to 5** based on how much winter coat they’ve shed, and scores can be easily recorded from a vehicle or horseback.

“It’s an easy trait to measure — no need to get cattle in the chute or disrupt routines,” Retallick-Riley says.

She adds that Angus breeders continue to lead the way in using genetic tools to solve production challenges. “Angus breeders have always been quick to adopt new technologies and genetic systems,” she says. “It’s a testament to their commitment to progress and to building cattle that perform in every environment.”

Conclusion

Managing heat stress requires both **practical management** and **long-term genetic planning**. By combining sound on-farm strategies — like optimizing water, feed timing, shade, and pen management — with genetic tools such as the HS EPD, producers can keep cattle comfortable, productive, and resilient, even under the summer sun.





Melbosstrand Private School & Joyce's Angus Stud



It has been six years now since Melkbosstrand Private School (MPS) has partnered with Joyce's Angus Stud to learn and teach the Agricultural students about Angus cattle. Mr. Seymore Curry and mr. Willem Swart have sacrificed their work time during these years to teach the learners about branding, inoculation, selection and breeding, artificial insemination, calving, weaning and cattle handling in general. The list of topics during these practical sessions is too long to mention, but needless to say the learners get thorough cattle education.

The focus on agriculture at our school has already impacted numerous learners' lives including their future career choices. We have a veterinary nurse in training, a few agricultural tertiary students at colleges e.g. Elsenburg, as well as learners planning to work on farms in America. We also have learners who are in line to ensure that their family farm will stay in their family. I cannot think of a better legacy than to leave learners with a deep love for nature, respect for animals and an understanding and appreciation for all the hard work that goes into ensuring sustainable food production.

In addition to the general agricultural education, mr. Basie Erasmus and mr. Swart have spent Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings to teach



selected learners the finer tricks of the showman's trade in order to prepare them for competing at the Moorreesburg Agricultural Youth Show. During the 2025 agricultural show MPS received a 4th, 5th and 6th place in the senior competition, as well as a 3rd place in the junior category. The impact of these achievements can afterwards be seen and felt in learners' improved self-confidence, their upright body posture and their general positivity towards life.

Joyce's Angus Stud also arranges various experts to teach the learners about animal genetics - Chanelle Steenekamp from Stamboek, animal nutrition - Ronel Joubert and AI-specialist Theuns Bruwer from World Wide Sires.

Except for cattle as a production unit, our MPS agricultural curriculum also focusses on vegetables, fruit and Rooibos. With the help of the Department of Agriculture - mr. Abels

- we had a RO water filtration system installed. We have a vegetable greenhouse and a fruit greenhouse which are being prepared for citrus trees. As every farmer will know, you need all the help you can get in order to succeed.

We also visit numerous farms in the area of which Hillcrest Olives, Eensgezind Dairy, ALG citrus farm in Citrusdal and Vondeling Rooibos farm in Clanwilliam are but a few. We are extremely grateful to all these angels who are willing to share their knowledge and skills with the learners. The cherry on the cake for the learners is the annual Bredasdorp NAMPO outing where new farm equipment, vehicles and everything under the sun are on display.

The saying: "It takes a village to raise a child." is indeed true for us at MPS and we are blessed to have a big agricultural village in the Western Cape to raise the future farmers of South Africa.





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SCAN ME



Traditions, Habits and Assumptions

Learning from and celebrating what has been and what will be

Tom Field, University of Nebraska-Lincoln - **Angus Journal**  October 2024

Traditions are the intergenerational exchange of values, beliefs, customs and important elements of culture.

Traditions provide a storehouse of wisdom, anchor people to time-proven principles and serve as an important adhesive that binds people across the ages. Traditions, at their best, provide lighthouses that aluminate pathways, teach philosophies and truths that strengthen both individuals and groups, and provide a shared understanding and context for making sense of life.

Acknowledging tradition recognizes there is something to be learned from our elders. The struggles and triumphs of previous generations offer powerful insight into how to deal with contemporary challenges. However, tradition is not enough – innovation, creativity and learning are not held by a single generation, but rather are ongoing processes where each generation can leave its mark and legacy.

The *JANUS EFFECT* is a concept that suggests while looking backward offers incredible lessons to guide future decisions, individuals and organizations must simultaneously look forward in making their decisions. The key is to have the capacity for both viewpoints – to learn from the past and to see around the corner into the future.

John Lyman (the 3rd), eight-generation executive vice president of Lyman Orchards in Middlefield, Conn., captures the conundrum of tradition: “I believe that the tradition that follows a family through eight generations is extremely powerful, quite tangible and very relevant. The secret is to let your tradition unreasonable burden you.”

Tradition, while an anchorage to wisdom and truth, only remain relevant through the process of examining the assumptions and conditions under which they were formed. Traditions that morph from guiding principles into habits must be stringently tested.

Habits – behaviors and practices that have become embedded into routine – may prove to be ineffective in a world of rapidly changing conditions. When habits become practices undertaken without a second thought, there is the risk of lost

opportunities due to inflexibility and rigid thinking arising from low commitment to the continuous process of assumption testing.

Just as faith is strengthened by being tested, so should our traditions and habits be tested in a vigorous process of sorting out the assumptions that underpin them.

The most important question we can use to initiate this process is to ask why. The power of “why” demands we pause amid a hectic life and reassess both positions and directions. The follow-up question that moves us forward is to ask, “Is there a better way?”

Simon Sinek gets to the heart of the matter: “When we know WHY we do what we do, everything falls into place. When we don't, we have to push things into place.”

Of all the roles undertaken by a leader, the single most important of them is to create clarity and confidence about why the organization exists; why it functions as it does; and the foundations of its values, behaviors and vision.

Leaders uncover the answer by studying their forebearers, leaning from the past – the good, the bad and even the ugly – while simultaneously looking beyond the horizon in search of new paths, innovations both transformative and incremental, experiencing the wonder of discovery, and understanding upon which our cherished traditions were founded.

There is one final step of importance when it comes to tradition. Each generation of leaders make a remarkable contribution to the future by taking time to develop and share the stories of those whom initiated, sustained and advanced cherished traditions as well as describing the legacy created by those who failed, pivoted, innovated and blazed new trails.

Humans are informed, inspired and strengthened through the power of story. Of all the legacies that can be gifted to the future, none is more important than to leave an authentic record that provides guidance to the next generation while empowering them to take action in their own time and circumstance.

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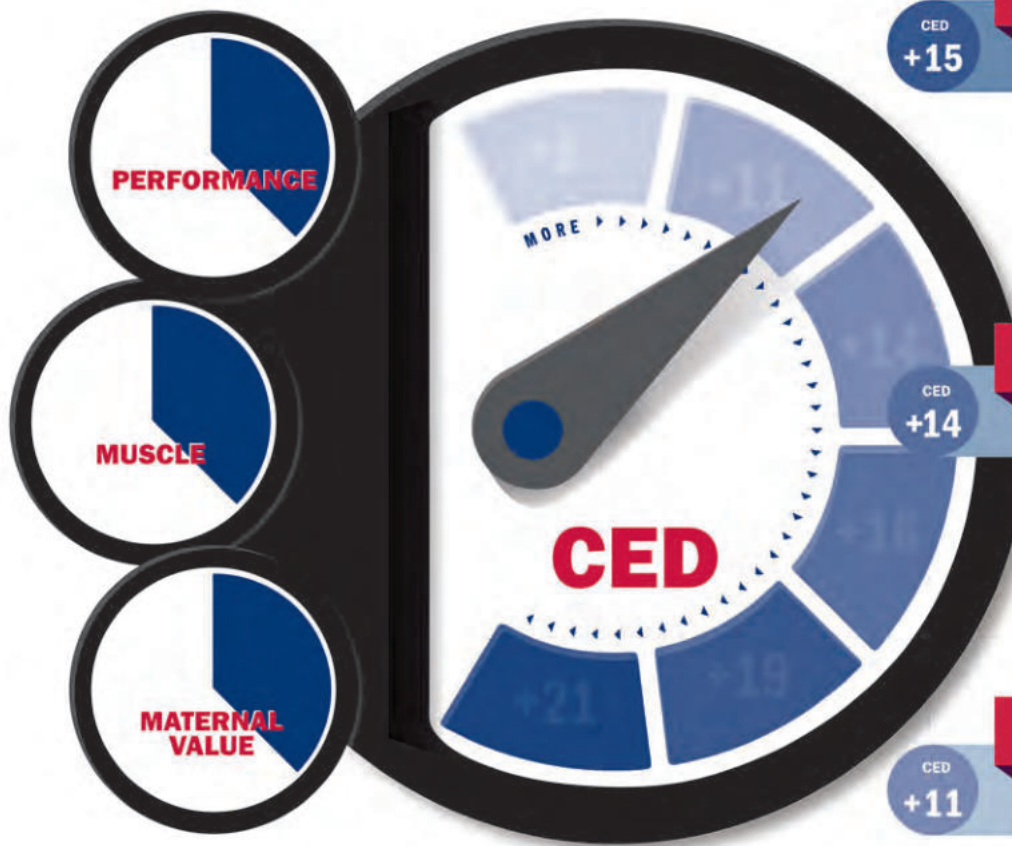
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EPD	+18	-3.9	+72	+123	+90	+0.1	+1.24	+24	+31	+36	+11	+48	+8.6	+18	+32	+36	+43	+1.10	0	+35	+0.1	+59	+80	+1.19	+0.15	0	-6	+95	+180	+328
ACC	.71	.86	.82	.64	.38	.66	.60	.53	.46	.40	.28	.30	.22	.31	.32	.32	.31	.38	0	.42	.43	.48	.40	.41	.37	.19				
%	1	1	40	45	35		30	25	3	10	30			1	15			25		85	75	35	35	5		30	5	20	10	

EPDs as of 12/8/2025 highlighted from a **MATERNAL PERSPECTIVE** **ALL-PURPOSE PERSPECTIVE**

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TRAIT	CED	BW	WW	YW	ADG	DMI	MILK	ME	HPG	CEM	STAY	MARB	YG	CW	REA	FAT	ProS	HB	GM
EPD	+20	-4.9	+76	+122	+0.29	+1.19	+23	+6	+12	+12	+13	+89	+11	+38	+15	+02	+143	+57	+86
ACC	.67	.81	.75	.74	.74	.44	.20	.23	.13	.36	.44	.51	.40	.56	.47	.40			
%	3	8	21	23	28					3		5		15			12		8

EPDs as of 11/11/2025 highlighted from a **MATERNAL PERSPECTIVE** **ALL-PURPOSE PERSPECTIVE**

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Harnessing AI for Higher Accuracy and Profits

Melissa Hart - Red Angus Vol.3 No.1  Spring Edition

Is careful planning the main obstacle to using artificial insemination in cow herds? Is it the lack of farm labor or producers abandon the technology because it didn't work well enough 40 years ago?

Whatever the reason, producers may be missing out on a profitable practice that could change their breeding philosophy and speed up their genetic progress. Having optimum genetics is increasingly important to meeting industry demands and is crucial to achieving premium dollars and enhancing returns on investment.

Sandy Johnson, Ph.D., professor and Extension specialist with Kansas State University, aims to promote wider adoption of reproductive technologies amongst cow-calf producers and educate them on management considerations that increase the likelihood of successful AI breeding.

Economic Benefits

Those producing bulls or seedstock for sale or marketing into premium quality beef grids can leverage opportunities available through AI.

“The ability to use high-accuracy sires improves our knowledge of their true genetic value so the EPDs we have are better predictors of future offspring,” Johnson said.

Another benefit producers cite is the value of replacements. “I interpret this to mean the replacement females they create with AI get them closer to their genetic and marketing goals that the natural-service sires they can buy.”

There is often a reduction in calving difficulty from high-accuracy, calving-ease AI sires as well. This also means cows cycle sooner after calving and are more likely to conceive early in the breeding season and wean an older, heavier calf.

According to Johnson, that with AI, fewer calves are lost during calving for several potential reasons. First, observers are paying better attention due to the time and labor it takes to AI and they want to see the fruits of their labor. If they used synchronization with their AI, they know they'll be producing lots of calves and are better prepared for calving. In addition, being able to use calving-ease bulls reduces the risk of cow and calf loss.

Johnson added that if we look at AI with estrus synchronization, then the age advantage might be considered. They are 21 days older (born to cycle sooner) and if calves gain 2 lbs. (0.907 kg) per day, that's an additional 40 lbs. (18.144 kg) at weaning.

Using AI sires can also reduce the need for natural-service sires, providing additional economic benefits.

Advantages with Accuracy

Accuracy offers many advantages when comparing calves out of AI sires with those from natural-service sires. AI sires with extensive offspring records, typically offer greater accuracy and thus lower risk than natural-service sires.

According to Johnson, even if both sides have the same EPD value, there is less risk with the high-accuracy AI sire. In addition, AI-bred replacement heifers typically command a premium at auction.

Those who have successfully adopted AI include many seedstock producers, as well as commercial operations that use it in replacement heifers to reduce calving difficulty while still meeting performance goals. These commercial producers also benefit from improving the genetic merit of their replacements.

Johnson indicated that commercial producers interested in marketing high-quality beef on a quality grid are switching to AI for greater carcass accuracy.

Carcass data collection takes time when using natural-service sires. “It's a longer climb in progress when you use your own bulls, so why not use bulls that we have more information on?” Johnson said. “There is more predictability about what the offspring will do in terms of carcass merit and the risk of producing outliers is reduced. With high accuracy sires, producers are more likely to hit their marketing target.

Planning Piece

When it comes to AI technology, having a plan in place is crucial. Before switching to an AI program, a K-State Research and Extension guide publication suggests scrutinizing pregnancy rates.

After a 60-day breeding season, pregnancy rates (number pregnant divided by number exposed) should be 85% to 90% plus, before starting a synchronization and AI program.

Lower fertility may indicate suboptimal health, nutrition or other management issues that can compromise AI success. A widely accepted recommendation is a Body Condition Score of 5 to 6 to ensure females are cycling properly.

Planning for adequate farm labor is another limiting factor. Producers often focus on feeding routines, cattle roundup, chute work and veterinary tasks but may not schedule labor for key times in heat detection, estrus synchronization and insemination. The solution is to think carefully about where the labor supply will come from and whether it will be available in peak times.

Adequate handling facilities are also a necessity. Cattle flow and efficiency are key. Johnson noted that inseminators who AI a lot of cows are, “fast but they also get cows regnant.”

Weather can also pose challenges when large numbers of calves arrive in a short period under poor conditions, so producers should ensure they have the resources to manage such circumstances.

Synchronization

Estrus synchronization can help increase the number of successfully bred females earlier in the season and tighten calving windows. According to Johnson, older calves will wean heavier and carry that advantage forward, either as replacement females or market cattle.

“Synchronizing cows for use with natural service is often a good first step for producers thinking about AI for the first time” she explained. “There are typically fewer steps and it can still increase the number of cows calving early, which benefits them the following year. Some producers may choose synchronization with natural service during a year when they can't manage their usual AI program but still want more cows bred early.”

“Many producers have learned the value of using synchronization with AI. Depending on current management, producers who used AI over time continue to

reap the benefit of a front-loaded calving season, shorter calving window and less need for calving assistance because of high-accuracy sires that reduces calving difficulty,” said Johnson.

“Producers who want to build on AI genetics, keep AI-sired replacement females and breed them to another AI sire and begin adding multiple generations.”

She added that AI-sired heifers will likely calve early in their breeding season and stay in the herd longer due to their age advantage.

Synchronization systems vary and each has a unique twist. Not all systems fit every operation and cost-benefit analyses are necessary. Johnson said optimal reproductive performance relies on solid year-round management but even well-managed cows will not respond if protocol errors occur. Poor results often stem from mistakes in treatment protocols and unrealistic expectations.

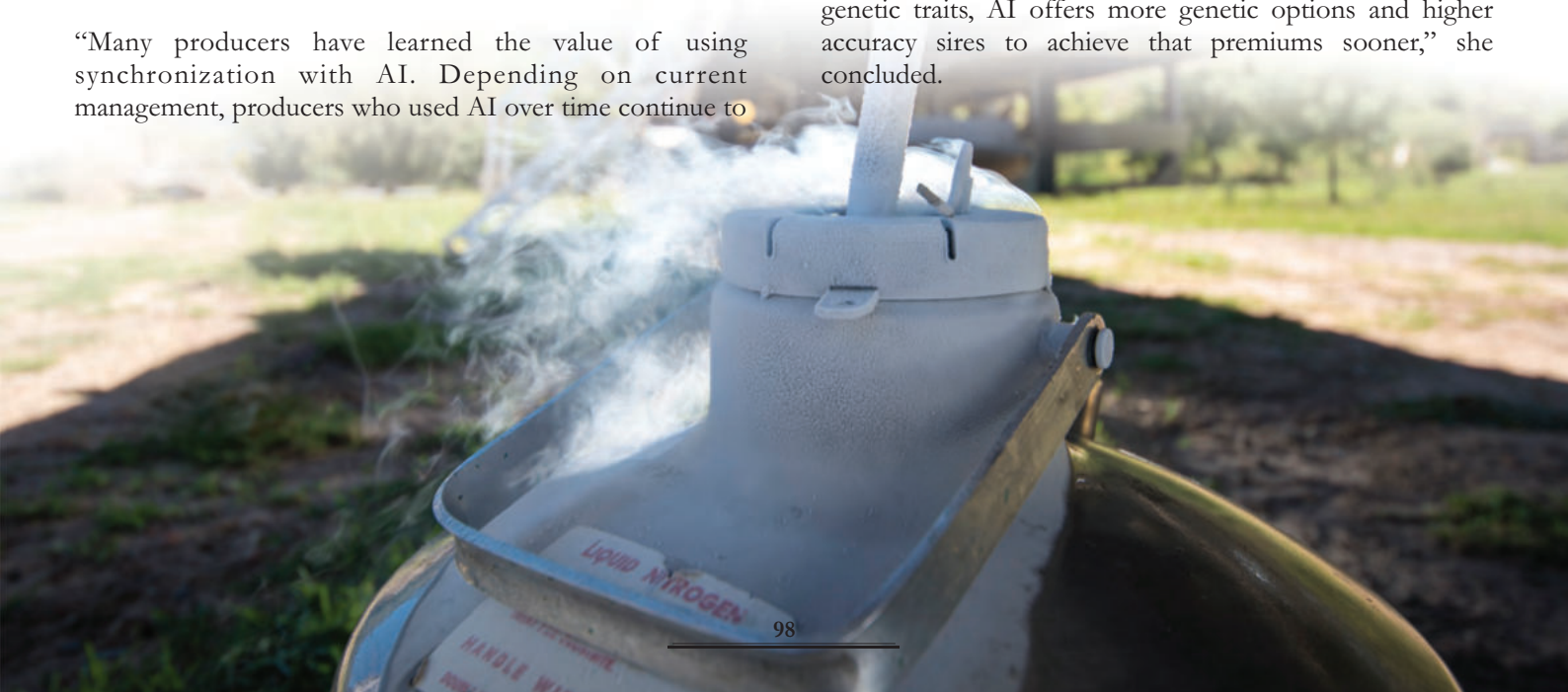
Sexed Semen

“For producers with strong marketing plans and AI skills, sexed semen provides an opportunity to improve their bottom line, assuming they have a solid plan for both male and female calves,” said Johnson. “Sexed semen may help generate replacement females (especially F1 females) in a more manageable way. Producers should still plan for reduced pregnancy rates with sexed semen and be pleased if they match those from conventional semen.”

The Breed Advantage

For the Red Angus breed specially, Johnson noted, “the more producers use high-accuracy sires, the quicker they can reach their genetic goals. If more heifers were bred using AI and accurate AI pregnancy data went into the database, the breed could learn more about heifers' ability to conceive early and more about the sire fertility.”

“If a producer has access to a market that pays a premium for genetic traits, AI offers more genetic options and higher accuracy sires to achieve that premiums sooner,” she concluded.





- ZEC Maverick -

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Making Sense of a Chaotic World

Tom Field, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. - **Angus Journal**  February 2025

The great challenge of blending tradition and technological innovation is not let either become an excuse. Tradition, left unexamined, may become an excuse to resist anything that might lead to growth, discovery or improvement. Humans may become fixed, if not outright addicted, to technology. Chasing the newest technology becomes an excuse to avoid the blood, sweat and tears that arise from an individual's pursuit of creativity, innovative capacity and problem-solving ability.

Tradition has remarkable value when it serves as guideposts, inspiration and a beacon of true north principles that assist us in building lives of virtue, meaning, usefulness and service to others. However, tradition can become a choke chain that stifles active problem-solving, limits agility and adaptability amid changing conditions, and creates barriers for ensuing generations to think independently.

Likewise, technology offers a path to improved productivity, enhancing efficiency and access to tools that enhance the quality of life. However, once our relationship with technology places us on the slippery slope of dependence, a high cost may be extracted. The cost may come in declining margins even as productivity increases.

When it comes to sorting out the value of traditions and technologies, consider the following questions to guide the creation of the right blend:

- Does it strengthen the foundation?

“Science and technology revolutionized our lives, but memory, tradition and myth frame our response”

– Arthur M. Schlesinger

- Is there a reasonable expectation for a positive return on investment?
- Does it contribute to healthy relationships?
- Is it aligned with true north principles?
- Will it matter six months from now?
- Does it limit or expand options?
- Is it a sunk cost or an investment?
- Is it a leash or a sail?
- Does it enhance the system and better connect the dots?
- Does it increase unhealthy stress?
- Does it harm others?
- Does it create lasting value?
- What will it demand of us in the future?
- What's it for?
- Who's it for?

While some schools of thought lean heavily towards technology as the solution, others beat the drum for sticking with “the tried and true” solutions of the past – neither approach offer the best value. Rather finding the blend of innovation and tradition offers a route to progress that allows for the duality of honoring both heritage and discovery.

In his thoughtful work, *The Human*

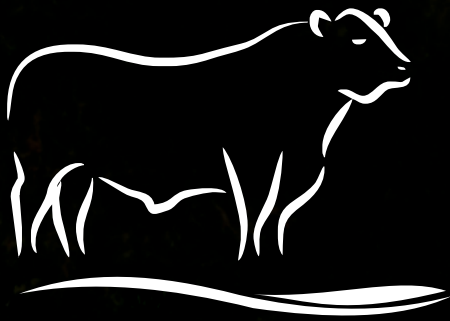
Advantage, Jay Richards answers the question of what will be left for humans if everything can be automated, “The answer lies in what might be abstract or outdated but will become even more crucial in tomorrow's economy: human virtue.”

Humans can choose an action that when repeated and practiced creates change. The pursuit of virtue leads to a deepening of purpose, connecting human dimensions into a more complete way of being, of learning not only the task but to embrace the process of developing emotional, physical, mental and spiritual health.

Richards points to five virtues that bridge our most cherished heritage with our drive to innovate, virtues that facilitate building a worthy future without sacrificing our liberty.

- **Courage:** accepting the risk of failure as part of the discovery process.
- **Antifragility:** expecting both failure and suffering as essential parts of the journey.
- **Altruism:** creating benefits for others.
- **Collaboration:** engaging with others in active exploration and learning.
- **Creative freedom:** mastering self as well as the skills required to create value for others.

The road map forward is not for the faint of heart. However, the process of way-making transforms and redeems the willing.



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IVF in the Industry

How is **inVITRO** fertilization revolutionizing beef production?

Cliff Lamb, Texas A&M University – **Angus Journal**  October 2025

In vitro fertilization (IVF) is no longer just a buzzword in technologies used for beef cattle assisted reproductive technologies. It has quietly revolutionized the word of animal agriculture, particularly beef cattle production.

As global demand for high-quality beef continues to soar, cattlemen and researchers alike have turned to advanced reproductive technologies to maximize genetic potential and productivity. Among these, IVF stands as a primary tool, offering unprecedented opportunities for herd improvement, rapid genetic advancement and operational efficiency.

The basics of IVF

IVF, at its core, involves collecting oocytes (egg cells) from donor cows, fertilizing them with selected sperm in a laboratory environment and subsequently transferring the resulting embryos into recipient cows. The process is more sophisticated than traditional embryo transfer (ET), as it allows for the selection of both dam and sire with genetic precision and can generate more embryos per donor annually than conventional methods.

The use of IVF technology was first applied to cattle in the late 1980s. But only in recent years has it become widely adopted, thanks to improvements in laboratory protocols, equipment and management strategies.

Today IVF is no longer the exclusive domain of large commercial outfits; it is increasingly accessible to small and medium-sized operations aiming to compete in a rapidly evolving market.

IVF in the United States

The United States has emerged as a global leader in the application of IVF technology in beef cattle. A confluence of factors has fostered this rise in use, including significant improvements in IVF technology, advanced technical and veterinary services, and a well-developed market for high-value genetics.

U.S. cattlemen have used IVF to accelerate genetic progress, rapidly multiplying the progeny of top-performing sires and dams. This has led to the widespread adoption of elite genetics; improved herd uniformity; and enhanced performance traits such as feed efficiency, meat quality and disease resistance. Companies specializing in IVF services have proliferated across major cattle-producing states with mobile laboratories, and on-farm oocyte collections has made the process more convenient than ever before.

Despite its success, IVF in the United States faces certain limitations. Cost remains a barrier for smaller producers, and the need for skilled technicians can restrict adoption in remote or underserved regions.

IVF around the world

While the United States is one of the leaders in overall adoption, other countries have made significant strides, sometimes outpacing U.S. producers in specific areas.

- Brazil is renowned for its innovative use of IVF in beef cattle. The country's tropical climate, which can challenge conventional reproduction, has made IVF an attractive alternative. The use of *Bos indicus* cattle, well-adapted to local conditions, has enable Brazil to develop unique protocols for oocyte collection and ET, setting global standards in efficiency.
- Australian producers use IVF to overcome geographic isolation and climate variability, focusing on maximizing genetic gain and herd adaptability. Use of IVF is often combined with genomic selection, allowing for rapid dissemination of the best genetics in expansive, low-density cattle operations.
- In the EU, IVF is less prevalent in beef than in dairy, due in part to stricter regulations and higher costs. However, countries such as France and the United Kingdom have niche IVF beef programs targeting premium markets and rare breeds.

- China is rapidly investing in IVF for both dairy and beef sectors as part of a national strategy to improve food security and domestic meat quality. The country's approach emphasizes scale, state-driven investment and integration with genetic improvement programs.

Trends shaping IVF adoption

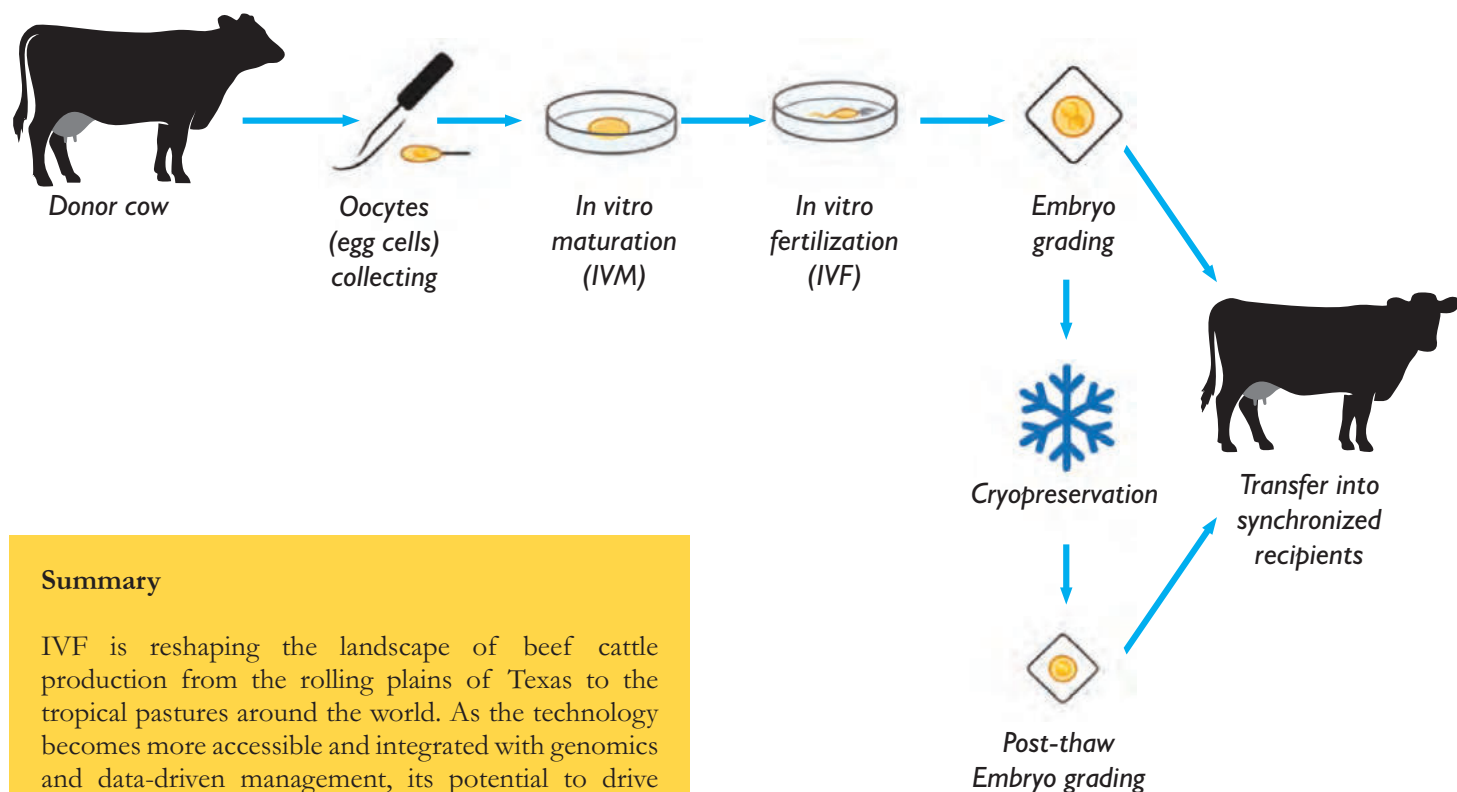
Several key trends are shaping the global trajectory of IVF in beef cattle, such as:

Cost reduction – Technological advances are steadily reducing the cost per embryo, making IVF accessible to a broader range of producers worldwide.

Integration with genomics – The combination of IVF and genomic selection allows for the rapid propagation of animals with desired traits, such as marbling, feed conversion and disease resistance.

Mobile and on-site IVF labs – Portable laboratories and field-based oocyte collection are making IVF practical even for remote ranchers, reducing logistical barriers.

Environmental adaptation – IVF is used to cross-breed and propagate cattle with enhanced tolerance to local climates and diseases, improving overall herd resilience.



Summary

IVF is reshaping the landscape of beef cattle production from the rolling plains of Texas to the tropical pastures around the world. As the technology becomes more accessible and integrated with genomics and data-driven management, its potential to drive genetic improvement, operational efficiency, and global competitiveness grows even greater.

Success in IVF hinges not only on embracing the technology, but on thoughtful management, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to balancing innovation to enhance advances in genetics. For cattlemen ready to take the next step, IVF represents not just a tool but a transformation opportunity in the quest to feed the world with better beef.

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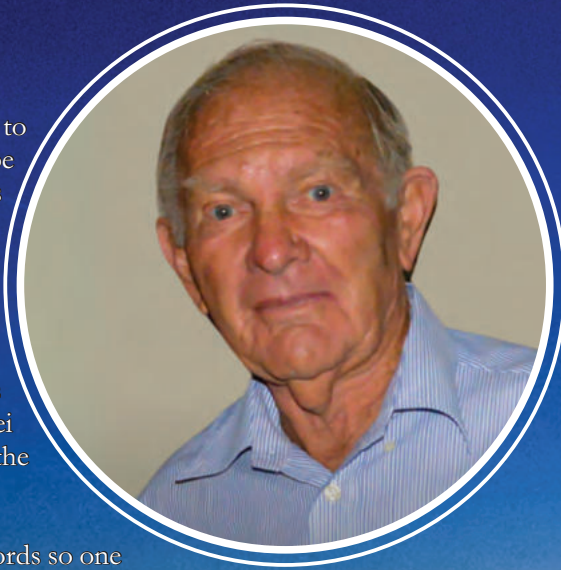
AUCTION & Important dates

VEILING & Belangrike datums

Date	Event	Location	Contact person	Cell:
January 12	Office opens			
March 13-14	Hertzogville Skou		RC Malherbe	084 851 8262
May 12-15	NAMPO	Bothaville		
28	Angus Pioniers Veiling	Melkbosstrand	Seymour Currie	083 327 9186
June 4	Wes-en Suid-Kaap Angusklub Veiling	Moorreesburg	Hoffie van Blerk	083 455 1151
6	Maluti Veiling	Bethlehem	Andre Breytenbach	082 774 6804
18	Rheeboksplaas Veiling	Ceres	Gielie Geldenhuys	082 460 6327
20	Prestige Veiling	Moorreesburg	Jannie Kotzè	083 651 9266
24	Transgariep Veiling	Trompsburg	Martiens le Roux Ian MacLachlan	082 772 9472 082 895 8188
July 15	JOC Production Sale	Dargle	Martin Watson	071 171 7902
16	East Cape Angus Sale	Alexandria	Anton Vermaak Warwick Evans	082 326 8509 082 571 6088
16	Hide-A-Way's Veiling	Migdol	Piet Delport Hendrik Delport	082 550 7847 082 222 4269
29	Mega Angus Veiling	Marquard	Gerrit van Rooyen	083 287 2092
August 4	Mclaren Angus	Dewetsdorp	Nico Pienaar	082 379 1220
14	Midlands Elite Angus Sale	Nottingham Road	Douglas Fletcher	082 413 9801
18	Astro Angus Veiling	Hendrina	Anton Pelser Jnr.	072 395 0561
20	Aucdeen Veiling	Molteno	Hannes Aucamp	082 772 5323
26	Angus Alliance Veiling	Kroon Boma	RC Malherbe JM Steyn Loutjie Campher	084 851 8262 072 408 5699 082 255 3037
September 1	Kroon Angus Veiling	Viljoenskroon	Johan Kahts Johannes Botha Enslin Coetzee	082 453 9817 083 272 6338 083 255 1638
2-5	Swartlandskou	Moorreesburg	Jannie Kotzè	083 651 9266
2	Knott Sale	Kei Road	Donald Knott	082 321 0673
3	Border Angus & Hereford	Queenstown	Lawrence Moorcroft Scott King	071 402 2028 078 925 8265
9	VJ Sale	Cathcart	Chris Purdon	082 879 2744
15	Dunedin Sale	Dordrecht	Carl Miles	073 330 5579
24	Malherbe ² Angus & Brangus	Hertzogville	RC Malherbe	084 851 8262
30	Vrystaat Angusklub Veiling	Bloemfontein	Gavin Jankielsohn	083 265 2684
October 1	AGM 2026 AJV	Bloemfontein		
December 15	Office closes			

Neville Lansdell 1940 - 2025

“Uncle Nev” as he was known to many of the Eastern Cape farmers, was a Red Angus breeder of no compromise. He farmed in the harsh tick-infested Alexandria area near the Bushman's River on the 930 ha farm Spadona. He acquired this farm after he was bought out in the former Ciskei under the consolidation of the homelands.



He was a quiet man of few words so one had to listen carefully. He and his wife Lucielle lived in Kenton-on-Sea and would travel out to his farm from this village. I would wait for him on the R72 at a gate to the farm. He would unlock the gate on arrival and we would proceed some distance to the kraals and dipping tank to conduct his annual inspection.

His cattle were tough and wiry, having grown up in sweetveld exposed to heartwater, red-water and gall-sickness ticks. His cattle were structurally sound, some begotten by AI but more latterly by selected herd sires. “Uncle Nev” based his selection for these and any other cattle on visual appraisal and secondly on their figures. Equally, any sub-standard figures at inspection were not even up for consideration. Neville had removed them from his per capita list, summarily dismissed as “not up to scratch”.

At inspection time he would call out in iXhosa the ear-tag number of the animal required and the herdsman would present it in the crush-pen. Such inspected animals were sold locally to commercial beef producers, many of whom were repeat buyers for these “no nonsense” bulls and heifers.

Lucielle accompanied Neville to most of the sales he attended, affectionately referred to by him as “oh she carries the cheque book”!

At inspection Lucielle kindly provided us with coffee and sandwiches which we enjoyed once the task had been completed. After one such occasion, I pointed down the valley to the Bushmen's River. I enquired if there were any fish there to which he affirmed “yes and we go down there to fish and enjoy some refreshments” he said with a twinkle in his eye.

Neville is survived by his wife Lucille, a son & daughter, both of whom live overseas.

In Remembrance

Peter Pentz 1944 - 2025

Peter was a dignified, quiet man who never sought the limelight. He went about his farming business in a silent, thoughtful manner. He was a deep thinker who when posed with a question, would look at the person posing the question and often say “I will let you know.” Sure enough a day or two later, he would contact the person and deliver a well thought of answer of immense standing.

He loved his livestock and bred amongst others, magnificent Holsteins, Herefords, Angus and Nguni. He also took a keen interest in wild game, running a large herd of diverse species in a game camp on Groote Post Farm.

He took immense pleasure in driving visitors around the farm showing them new vineyards, planted fields, constructed contours and the latest calf crop. His right-hand man in the livestock BC knew almost all the animals by name and would spell these out when viewing them.

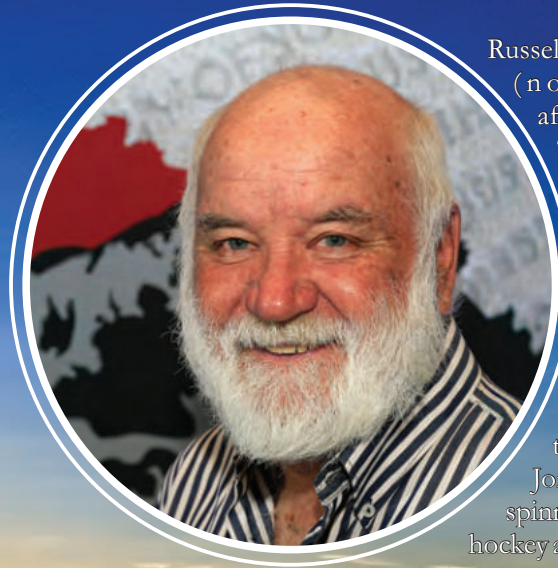
As an indication of his deep thinking, Peter changed from producing and marketing milk to growing a vineyard and marketing now locally well recognised wines under the famous brand Groote Post. He extended this vision further by opening a restaurant on the farm and to having



embrance

by John Boule

Russel Marriott 1952 - 2026



Russell was born in Bulawayo, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). He was affectionately given the nickname "Gugs" by his brother Kenneth who couldn't say Russell.

He was educated at Oriel Boy's High School. He enjoyed sport at this school, being the first team scrumhalf partner with Jonathan Stones the flyhalf. He also excelled in cricket, opening the batting with his flyhalf partner Jonathan. Gugs was an effective off-spinner with the red ball. He also played hockey as well.

Russell worked in Old Mutual in the early 1970s in Salisbury (Harare) and it was whilst watching Aberdeen Angus cattle parade around the ring at the Salisbury Agricultural Show that a Black cow stood on his foot which made Gugs take notice of the breed. Ever since that day he was determined to breed and farm Angus cattle. He married Kathy and were blessed with two boys Gregg and Zane.

He moved down to South Africa in 1984 where he worked as the pedigree breeding manager for Ross Poultry Breeders in Gauteng. On his farm at Three Rivers, Russell bred Angus cattle, the first of which came from the Blairmore Dispersal sale in 2002. He was very proud and used his knowledge from the poultry industry to interpret Angus bloodlines. He bred an Angus bull Marrigold Total Rogue which was purchased by the then Taurus AI Co-operative and sired many a calf out of dairy heifers right around South Africa. This bull was a stalwart for calving ease in the cattle industry. He was elected to serve on the Angus Council from 2018 to 2022.

He is survived by Kathy and his children Gregg, Zane and daughter-in-law Nikki.

market/open days to the general public. His quiet manner enthused confidence to all those employed by the farm and other entities.

In cattle breeding, animals often fail to live up to expectation. An example of this was the use of imported Red Angus semen Mulberry 24P in his herd. At inspection of the yearling bulls, a large percentage of them had undershot lower jaws, a heritable defect unknown at that time. The bulls were removed from the pen and Peter went to the side of the kraal, put his head against his folded arms and remained there for a long time. He hid his disappointment in these bulls which failed inspection and never spoke about them again.

Peter was a most hospitable man who loved entertaining. At end of a long working day inspecting various Angus on Groote Post, he would quietly enjoy a glass of his fine wine with the magnificent view of the west coast sea from the large house right on the Bloubergstrand seafront.

He is survived by his wife Lesli, children Nick, Wouter and Dianne and Grandchildren.

2025

Annual Prize Giving Dinner



Pat Mossop awards: Johannes Botha (gold), JM Steyn (gold), Andre Breytenbach (gold), RC Malherbe (silver), Kevin Miles (gold), Warwick Evans (silver), James Kelly (silver), Jean Blignaut (silver), Ruben Redelinghuys (silver), Stefan Terblanche (gold), Wilru Campher (gold), Anton Pelsner (silver), Nick Pentz (silver), Johan Kahts (silver) and Basie Blignaut.



Ben Oosthuizen Trophy for Personality of the Year 2025
Mari Roets was the winner of the award.
Basie Bezuidenhout and Mari Roets.



Elgro River Lodge – Potchefstroom Northwest Province

Annual Prize Giving Dinner

Hennie Langenhoven Trophy for the Best Club of the Year 2025. The North West Angus Club was awarded the trophy.

Basie Blignaut, Ruben Redelinghuys, Piet Delport, Kobus Delport, Mari Roets (Chairperson), Anneri Otto, Loutjie Campher, Lliam Dreyer, Wilru Campher, Kobus Marais and Ben Nell.



SA Angus Society Trophy for the Commercial Producer of the Year 2025.

The winner was Hendrik Botha from Marquard. Basie Bezuidenhout and Hendrik Botha.



NJ Kruger Herdenkingstrofee for the Best Young Breeder for 2025

The winner of this annual award was Mari Roets. Basie Bezuidenhout and Mari Roets.



2025

Annual Prize Giving Dinner



Elgro River Lodge – Potchefstroom Northwest Province

Annual Prize Giving Dinner





2025

Annual Prize Giving Dinner



Elgro River Lodge – Potchefstroom Northwest Province

Annual Prize Giving Dinner



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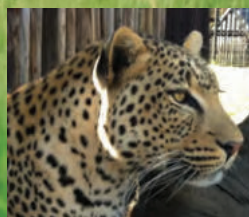


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Angus



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VEILINGDATUM:
17^{de} Produksieveiling, 26 Augustus 2026
te Kroon Boma

Besoek ons webwerf by
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30 Bulle • 35 Vroulike stoetdiere • 50 Kommersiële diere

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