

Breeders Journal



Dedicated to Improving Beef Production and Reproduction

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Fall/Winter 2009



There's something to be said for *good friends.*

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- Welded handle design that lasts
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Exclusive ABS flip-top lid

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ROCK SOLID



Rock Solid
A.I.
Proven
.98 Accuracy

In Focus - 25,000+ Progeny - 1,700+ dtrs

Trait	Performance						Maternal						
	CED	BW	WW	YW	YH	SC	CEM	MILK	Hd/Dts	MW	MH	HP	DOC
EPD	+14	-1.2	+54	+100	-0.1	+1.74	+12	+24	350	+64	+0.6	+4	+21
ACC	.95	.98	.97	.96	.96	.96	.78	.84	.971	.74	.74	.59	.92

Carcass				Groups/Progeny			\$EN	-2.22
CW	MARB	REA	FAT	Carcass	Steer	Ultrasound Bull+Heifer		
+8	+61	+0	+031	30	34	4397	\$W	+34.35
.66	.71	.70	.66	67	70	13145	\$G	+27.83
							\$B	+47.66 TOP 25%



Rock Solid
A.I.
Proven
.99 Accuracy

New Design 878 - 42,000+ Progeny - 1,300+ dtrs

Trait	Performance						Maternal						
	CED	BW	WW	YW	YH	SC	CEM	MILK	Hd/Dts	MW	MH	HP	DOC
EPD	+9	+1.5	+44	+84	+0.4	+4.5	+10	+31	3040	+19	+0.6	+9	+6
ACC	.96	.99	.98	.97	.97	.97	.94	.96	12938	.94	.93	.86	.92

Carcass				Groups/Progeny			\$EN	+0.72
CW	MARB	REA	FAT	Carcass	Steer	Ultrasound Bull+Heifer		
+11	+38	+05	+015	101	34	8496	\$W	+35.21
.82	.84	.82	.81	244	54	20267	\$G	+23.16
							\$B	+42.51 TOP 25%



Rock Solid
A.I.
Proven
.98 Accuracy

Lead On - 15,000+ Progeny - 4,000+ dtrs

Trait	Performance						Maternal						
	CED	BW	WW	YW	YH	SC	CEM	MILK	Hd/Dts	MW	MH	HP	DOC
EPD	+4	+2.3	+52	+101	+0.4	+72	+4	+30	1103	+10	+0.3	+8	+20
ACC	.92	.98	.97	.96	.95	.95	.88	.92	3678	.86	.85	.79	.89

Carcass				Groups/Progeny			\$EN	+3.84
CW	MARB	REA	FAT	Carcass	Steer	Ultrasound Bull+Heifer		
+5	+41	+29	-.057	15	15	3468	\$W	+41.30
.58	.64	.64	.58	33	40	8686	\$G	+34.70
							\$B	+52.32 TOP 25%



Rock Solid
A.I.
Proven
.96 Accuracy

Image Maker - 5,000+ Progeny - 600+ dtrs

Trait	Performance						Maternal						
	CED	BW	WW	YW	YH	SC	CEM	MILK	Hd/Dts	MW	MH	HP	DOC
EPD	+10	+0.6	+66	+110	+0.1	+14	+4	+36	98	+43	+0.1	+10	-1
ACC	.89	.96	.94	.92	.86	.92	.70	.79	418	.66	.65	.64	.80

Carcass				Groups/Progeny			\$EN	-11.03
CW	MARB	REA	FAT	Carcass	Steer	Ultrasound Bull+Heifer		
+6	+11	+10	-.052	6	22	791	\$W	+44.77
.38	.48	.53	.42	8	50	2543	\$G	+20.68
							\$B	+40.25 TOP 25%



Rock Solid
A.I.
Proven
.96 Accuracy

Cheyenne - 2,750 Progeny - 600+ dtrs

Trait	Performance				Maternal					
	CED	BW	WW	YW	MILK	TM	ME	HPG	CEM	STAY
EPD	+7	-0.1	+42	+85	+22	+43	+3	+12	+6	+8
ACC	.93	.96	.95	.94	.93	.60	.76	.93	.29	.29

Carcass		
MARB	REA	FAT
+44	+03	+04
.73	.69	.57

TOP 25%



Rock Solid
A.I.
Proven
.97 Accuracy

Dream On - 8,000+ Progeny - 1,700+ dtrs

Trait	Performance				Maternal			
	CED	BW	WW	YW	MCE	MILK	MWW	STAY
EPD	+15.2	-1.0	+33.5	+53.0	+13.1	-1.7	+15.0	+18.8
ACC	.94	.97	.97	.96	.92	.95	.95	.28

Carcass						\$API	\$136
CW	YG	MARB	BF	REA	SHR		
-7.9	+01	+48	+04	+20	-13	\$TI	\$73
.61	.61	.88	.90	.88	.27		

TOP 25%

DNA MARKERS

DNA markers and their use for genetic advancement has been a hot topic lately, we have asked some of the leading people in the industry for their thoughts on the role of DNA markers in genetic evaluations.

Dr. Denny Funk, Group Chief Scientist, ABS Global Inc. and Genus, plc.

How are genomics being used in the dairy industry?

Genome-enhanced predicted transmitting abilities (ge-PTAs) are now routinely calculated by USDA for dairy cattle in the United States. All young bulls that are being progeny tested by the major A.I. organizations are now genotyped using the Illumina 50k SNP chip, and the genotypes are sent to USDA for inclusion into ge-PTA calculations. All traditional traits, such as milk yield, protein yield, conformation traits, and health traits are “topped off” with genomic results, and ge-PTAs have essentially replaced traditional PTAs. Similar to traditional PTAs, the ge-PTAs include pedigree and performance information on the individual plus its relatives, but now also include genomic results from the individual trait-SNP association research undertaken by USDA for each trait summarized.

Although ge-PTAs are now routine, the amount of information that genomics adds to the accuracy of the breeding values is equivalent to about 10-20 progeny. In dairy cattle, a traditional progeny test would include information from about 100 offspring. Therefore, almost all young bulls are still progeny tested by the A.I. companies to obtain a higher accuracy PTA than can be achieved from pedigree and genomics alone. Results from the three USDA evaluations in 2009 (January, April, and August) clearly show that ge-PTAs can still change a great deal as progeny information is added into the genetic evaluations.

Having ge-PTAs for young bulls has allowed the dairy industry to more intensely screen which bulls are the best candidate bulls to progeny test, but it has not replaced progeny test. Results to date indicate that ge-PTAs for young sires are much closer to traditional parent average PTAs than they are to ge-PTAs that include progeny information.

Traits with lower heritability estimates, such as fertility traits and fitness traits, are traits where higher accuracy breeding values would be most beneficial, and in theory, genomics could help increase the accuracies for these low heritability traits substantially. But it also takes much more data to get accurate genomic estimates for these low heritability traits than for higher heritability traits, and having lots of performance data for these low heritability traits will be essential to achieve accurate genomic estimates. We face the same challenge with tradition breeding values, where it always has been difficult to obtain the volume of data necessary to achieve high accuracy breeding values for these low heritability traits.

Lastly, we must remember that mother nature is constantly reshuffling the genetic “deck of cards” via chromosome crossover and other wonderfully complex genetic mysteries that we don’t fully understand, and therefore we must re-estimate the genomic effects every couple of generations to ensure that the genomic results observed in previous generations are still applicable to current generations. That will require a diligent commitment to collect performance information on lots of individuals moving forward. This continual collection of large volumes of performance data is crucial to making genomics applicable both today and in the future.

How are genomics being used for genetic selection in the pig industry?

Unlike the dairy industry where USDA calculates breeding values in the U.S., all genetic evaluations for pigs are done by the individual breeding companies. PIC, (the pig breeding company owned by Genus) has been incorporating genomics into their breeding values for over 15 years, but it is only recently with the development of the 60k pig SNP chip in 2009 that genomics have started to have any appreciable impact on the accuracy of estimated breeding values (EBVs). Prior to the dense 60k chip, PIC had upwards of 50 significant markers for some traits, but the increase in EBV accuracy from this small number of markers was small.

Similar to dairy cattle, PIC is now adding the genomic results from the 60k SNP chip to the traditional breeding value information (pedigree and performance data) to arrive at ge-EBVs for each trait summarized. Hence these ge-EBVs replace traditional EBVs, and selection of individuals to use as parents remains the same as before: Rank the animals based on ge-EBV, and use the accuracy of the ge-EBV to determine how heavily to use that individual in the breeding program.



Bill Bowman, Chief Operating Officer and Director of Performance Programs, American Angus Association:

Explain the vision that AGI has for incorporating genomics in the genetic evaluation process?

We have continued to follow the development of DNA technology and how that technology could ultimately be used in genetic improvement. Historically incorporating the use of science and technology to provide the beef industry with reliable information characterizing Angus genetics has remained the focus. The scientific community’s thought process has moved from developing independent selection tools and using the genomic information to

REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION?

incorporating the genomic information into national cattle evaluation procedures and EPDs. The Beef Improvement Federation has provided some guiding philosophy on the use of genomic information....

“BIF believes that information from DNA tests only has value in selection when incorporated with all other available forms of performance information for economically important traits in NCE, and when communicated in the form of an EPD with a corresponding BIF accuracy. For some economically important traits, information other than DNA tests may not be available. Selection tools based on these tests should still be expressed as EPD within the normal parameters of NCE.”

We are following this approach as we move forward with the implementation of genomic enhanced EPDs.

How would you advise breeders to use the new genomics panels in their programs?

We encourage the breeders to use genomic enhanced EPDs from our National Cattle Evaluations as a part of their selection strategies. Genomic enhanced carcass EPDs are the first traits to be released. In a timely fashion, genomic, carcass and ultrasound databases can be used to produce these carcass EPDs. We still encourage breeders to measure phenotypic traits as much as possible because these records have great long term value in the evaluation of economically relevant traits.

Dr. Wade Shafer, Director of Performance Programs, American Simmental Association:

How much benefit or accuracy from current DNA markers should producers expect when selecting yearling bulls, replacement and donor females or A.I. sires?

First, genomic test results should only be used if: 1) estimates from traditional genetic evaluation (EPDs) are not available

for the trait of interest or 2) the genomic data are incorporated into traditional genetic evaluation.

For traits where EPDs are not available, most current genomic panels will produce genetic predictions with BIF accuracies equivalent to the low end of pedigree estimated EPDs (less than .10). For traits where they are available, genomic data will provide a slight increase in accuracy when included in the evaluation of low accuracy animals (e.g., non parents). They will not enhance the accuracy of evaluation for mid- to high-accuracy animals.

The industry is rapidly moving toward an infrastructure capable of incorporating genomic data into National Cattle Evaluation (NCE). Also, several entities are feverishly working on genomic panels that will provide more information to NCE.

If you were king for a day what traits would you like to be able to use DNA markers to select for and why?

I would like to see DNA markers used in the evaluation of all traits.

Though currently available genomic panels do not provide a great deal of value, as the technology evolves genomic data will become an integral component in genetic prediction. The value of the technology will only be fully harnessed when genomic panels and the NCE infrastructure capable of utilizing them are developed for all economically relevant traits.

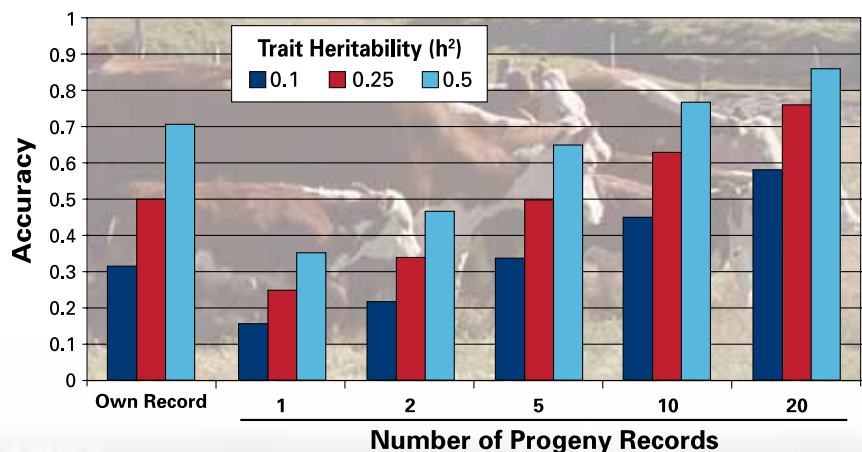
Alison Van Eenennaam, Animal Genomics and Biotechnology Extension Specialist, University of California, Davis:

Can you help put DNA markers and progeny testing in perspective – how many progeny would a DNA marker test be equal to?

That depends on how accurate the test is, and also on the heritability of the trait. Accuracy is defined as the correlation between the estimated breeding value (e.g. EPD) and the true value. Note that BIF accuracies that are listed in U.S. sire catalogs are more conservative than this definition and tend to be lower for a given amount of information. In a perfect world the accuracy value would be 1, and it does in fact approach that for well-proven sires with many progeny records. However, on young animals there is less information available upon which to estimate genetic merit.

Continued on page 7

Effect of Number of Progeny Records on Accuracy



Continued from page 6

Progeny testing provides a way to obtain this information, although it involves waiting for an animal to reproduce prior to obtaining an accurate genetic merit estimate. For traits that are highly heritable, offspring strongly resemble their parents and so only a few progeny are needed to give an accurate indication of genetic merit. Simply put the higher the heritability, the more the trait is influenced by genetics. The figure on the previous page shows how progeny test information influences the accuracy of genetic merit estimates for traits of different heritability.

So, now to answer the question that was asked – and that is – how many progeny would a DNA marker test be equal to? That depends on the accuracy of the DNA marker test and the heritability of the trait it is predicting. If a DNA test has an accuracy of 0.5 for a trait with a heritability of 0.25, then from the graph above that test would be equivalent to having 5 progeny records from the animal that was DNA tested, or to having the animal's own record for that trait. A DNA like this would be very useful for traits that are hard to measure (e.g. carcass traits).

So, what is the accuracy of tests that are currently on the market for beef cattle? The only independent source of that data is at the Australian beef CRC website (<http://www.beefcrc.com.au/Aus-Beef-DNA-results>) where the relevant value is the rg (genetic correlation). At the current time, tests on the market have variable accuracies ranging from 0 to 0.25, with the notable exception of meat tenderness tests which have consistently been shown to have higher accuracies (0.13-0.55). Tenderness has a heritability of ~ 0.3.

As DNA technology advances how do you see the tests benefiting commercial and purebred cattle producers?

The hope is that as the technology advances, the tests are going to become more accurate, and also encompass a range of difficult to measure traits (e.g. female fertility). Ideally tests will be for traits for which data are hard to get or expensive to measure, and which contribute greatly to the bottom line. Feed efficiency would be a good example of such a trait. This will give producers a way to obtain genetic merit estimates for these otherwise difficult traits. There are a number of issues that need to be resolved before the power of DNA tests will be useful for the beef industry. It is not clear how well tests work in different breeds, and therefore effects need to be examined in a range of breeds. This is not something that is easily done, and many breeds do not have data to determine if DNA tests work in their populations. Additionally it seems that discovery populations might need to be very large (thousands of animals) to increase the accuracy of tests and it is an expensive proposition to develop large populations of animals with thousands of measurements on difficult or expensive to measure traits! Although current tests do not have very high accuracies, it is hoped that this will increase in the future with the development of new markers. For the seedstock producer DNA tests offer the opportunity to increase the accuracy of selection and hence increase their rate of genetic gain. This means they can sell better bulls (i.e. more valuable bulls) to commercial cattle producers. Higher accuracies on yearling bulls will also provide some peace of mind to bull buyers, because accurate EPDs change little over time compared to low accuracy EPDs where there is greater potential for the values to change as more data becomes available.



Doug Frank, ABS Global Beef Product Manager

What role do DNA markers play in the current selection of bulls entering the ABS Beef program? In the next 3 to 5 years?

To this point, DNA markers have played very little role in the selection of young bulls entering the ABS lineup. We've agreed with the Beef Improvement Federation stance that the

Genetic Correlation (r)	BIF Accuracy	# of progeny records required	
		Low Heritability (0.10)	Moderate Heritability (0.30)
0.1	.01	1	1
0.2	.02	2	1
0.3	.05	4	2
0.4	.08	8	3
0.5	.13	13	5
0.6	.20	22	7
0.7	.29	29	12
0.8	.40	70	22
0.9	.56	167	53
0.99	.93	1921	608
0.995	.99	3800	1225

Accuracies of estimated breeding values based on (A) the correlation with true breeding values (r) and (B) the BIF standard, and the number of progeny test records required to obtain these accuracy values for traits of low (0.1) and moderate (0.3) heritability.

Source: Cattle Network, Cattle Breeding: Marker-Assisted Selection, Alison Van Eenennaam, University of California Department of Animal Science

genomics piece needed to be included as part of the overall genetic prediction through EPDs to be truly effective.

With improving chips and the advent of genomic enhanced EPDs we would expect this technology to play a larger role in what we do in coming years. As part of an EPD, genomic information will become another tool in the toolbox allowing us to have better and more accurate predictions on the young bulls that we sort through each year.

Just as we do with individual performance data, we will have to be careful to not to get too hung up on one component and risk overvaluing it in the process. That's where the inclusion of genomic information as part of the EPD and corresponding accuracy will be extremely helpful.

Depending on the trait and markers that have been identified, we would initially expect the genomic component to contribute a modest amount to overall accuracy depending on the trait – somewhere in the range of what individual performance measures contribute or up to the accuracy value of 5-10 progeny records.

ABS has always held fast to the principles of progeny testing, do you see the role of progeny testing diminishing in the future? How will DNA markers fit into the progeny testing scheme?

We still see progeny testing as the key component of delivering high accuracy, fully proven bulls. That proving process is

similar to a long journey. DNA technology holds the potential of fine tuning the direction that we take and speeding up the start of that trip. However, it is very unlikely that it will provide a short cut or eliminate the journey. It will still take a lot of miles or evaluated progeny to fully understand a bull's true transmitting ability.

ABS will certainly use DNA technology to fine tune our selection process to get a better handle on the young bulls we evaluate and the cows behind them. At the same time we think it is imperative "to put in the miles" to progeny test and validate the complete genetic profiles of our bulls in real world environments. And, today it remains the only way to deliver the high accuracy Rock Solid sires that our customers have come to expect.

Also, as it relates to DNA technology, progeny testing will continue to be critical to providing the largest and most up to date datasets for training and validation of future genomic developments.

ABS continues to be committed to real world

progeny testing of our bulls even for traits that are expensive and difficult to measure like feed efficiency and tenderness. The Angus Sire Alliance program is one of the key components of that commitment along with relationships with groups like Power Genetics and breed association programs like the American Simmental Association Carcass merit project. ■

Take home points for producers on the evolving use of DNA markers in genetic selection

The most effective use of DNA marker data is through genomic-enhanced EPDs

- Genomic data needs to be combined with traditional pedigree information, individual performance and progeny performance data
- Genomics will increase EPD accuracies the most for young cattle or animals with few progeny records
- Progeny proven sires remain the best source of high accuracy genetics

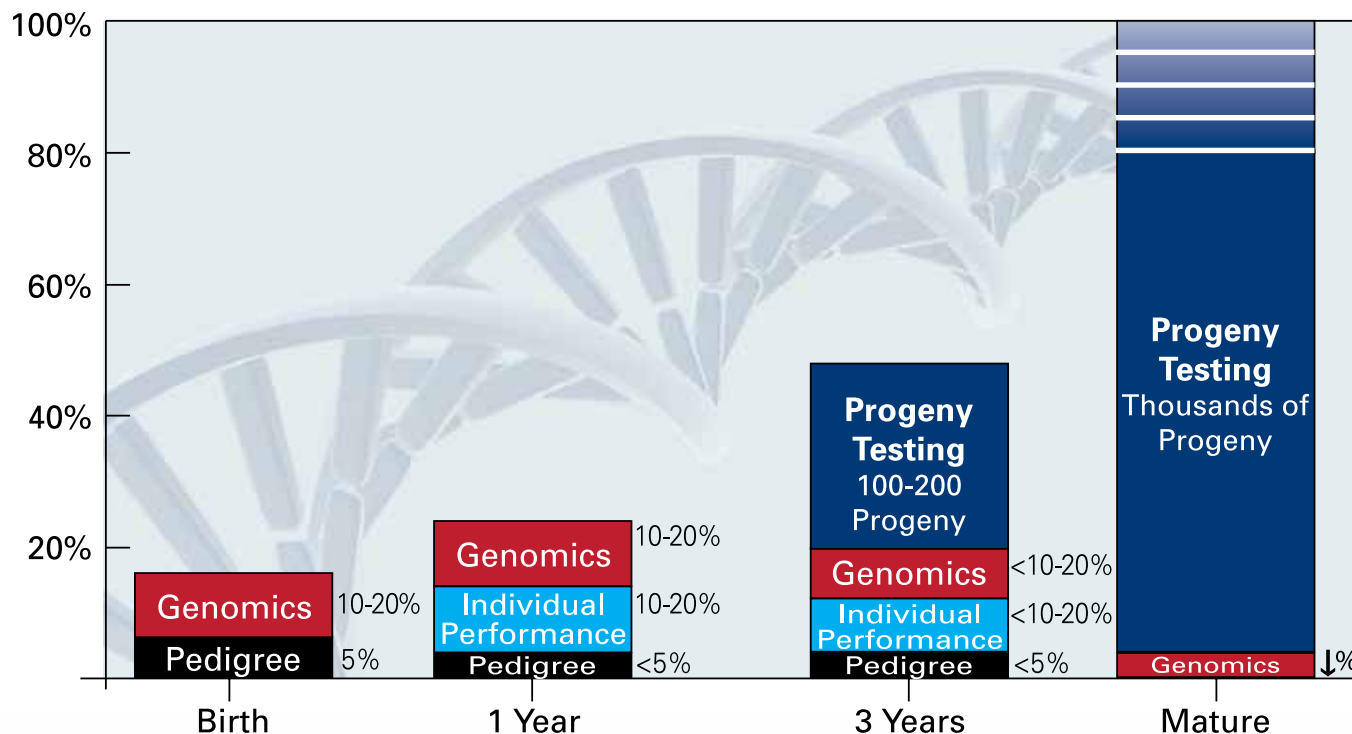
Don't stop progeny testing and measuring phenotypic traits

- Individual phenotypes will continue to have significant impact on individual EPDs
- Progeny testing will continue to be the biggest accuracy driver for heavily used sires and donor dams
- Expanding the use of DNA technology to new (and more difficult) traits will require large volumes of phenotypic data for these traits
- Phenotypes will be needed on an ongoing basis to update and "retrain" existing marker effects

There will be multiple sources of genomic information

- The most effective genomic data will be breed specific with training data sets very similar to the target populations
- It will be difficult to obtain accurate genomic results for small breeds with limited data sets
- Challenges remain in providing effective across-breed marker panels

Example Accuracy Contributions Over a Bull's Lifetime



Pedigree and genomic data have their largest relative impact on young animals. As successive components are added, overall accuracy increases, but the contribution of each individual piece declines. Progeny data is the key component of high accuracy proofs and in large enough numbers eventually overwhelms pedigree, individual performance and genomic information.

* Actual contributions are dependent on heritability of the trait, the available ancestral information and the genetic correlation of the DNA markers used.

ABS New Sires



MONOPOLY 109XX888

HEAT WAVE x CENTURY TOUCHSTONE ANGUS

Win Big with MONOPOLY

- ✓ Moderated frame, full of muscle and style
- ✓ Amazing potential for incredible calf crop
- ✓ Best used on moderate to larger framed cows
- ✓ Calves already having huge success
- ✓ TH Carrier / PHA Free



BOJO 109CM118

ALI x ALIAS x HEAT SEEKER

WOW!.....What an Ali Son

- ✓ Very thick and stout with a clubby look
- ✓ Wide based, sound structure and flexible
- ✓ Awesome profile with great hair and style
- ✓ TH Carrier/PHA Free



WALKS ALONE 54XB007

HEAT WAVE x 7587 DRAFT PICK SON x FULL FLUSH

Power House

- ✓ Very thick hipped and extremely wide based
- ✓ Incredible hair, style and attractiveness
- ✓ Unreal stoutness of bone and foot size
- ✓ Use on nice patterned cows that need more power
- ✓ TH Carrier / PHA Free



HOLLYWOOD 137XX2766

HEAT WAVE x DRAFT PICK ANGUS

Big Star Potential... Look at HOLLYWOOD

- ✓ Incredibly thick, stout and functional
- ✓ Deep bodied, sound structured and very attractive patterned
- ✓ Bone and stoutness in a deadly combination
- ✓ Calves already topping sales and winning shows
- ✓ TH Carrier / PHA Free



Building an Improved

At ABS, we recognize the value of the Brangus breed in challenging environments. In the hot, humid areas of the Southeastern tier of the U.S. Brangus cattle are able to maintain/improve performance and fertility. In more arid climates in the Southwest and Western states, Brangus cattle have the ability to travel, forage and survive on the toughest ranges. Not limited to these areas, Brangus cattle are found from border to border and coast to coast.

In areas where breeders have utilized English breeds for several generations, there is often a need to interject heterosis through planned crossbreeding.

Brangus cattle can do this without losing maternal or carcass value. At the same time, Brangus genetics can be combined in an Exotic rotational system to provide this same maternal advantage. Longevity, “do ability” and foraging ability all come as additive advantages in each of these scenarios.

As we began to build our Brangus lineup, we established criteria that most cattlemen can relate to. Beginning at the ground and working upward, all of the sires have been evaluated for correct feet, joints and skeletal design. We understand the environments the Brangus progeny will be expected to survive in, so soundness is of the utmost priority. Equally as important, are fertility, fleshing ability and docility. Once we have identified these traits in a bull, it has been important to recognize the value of his dam and sire’s progeny performance, correct maturity patterns and desirable sheaths.

ABS Global’s Brangus initiative is to supply environmentally adapted genetics for both registered and commercial cattlemen across the U.S. and the world. Over the past several years, we have built a Brangus lineup that combines some of the breed’s most proven cow families with performance oriented and calving ease genetics.

Brangus cattle are 5/8 Angus and 3/8 Brahman. Angus genetics provide maternal and carcass value while Brahman genetics add environmental adaptability and insect resistance. Over the past ten years, seedstock Brangus breeders have methodically and selectively added muscle and intramuscular fat while moderating mature size and cleaning sheath designs. Today’s progressive Brangus genetics have the ability to exceed the needs of producers in a wide array of environments while meeting feedlot and packer challenges.





As with our other breeds, ABS believes providing calving ease genetics is critical. In our Brangus lineup we have done this while maintaining muscle and performance in the bulls. For you, as a cattleman, these calving ease genetics must be backed by generations of known low birth weights. Rest assured, we have found Brangus genetics that will allow you to breed your heifers with confidence.

If you are searching for a heterosis advantage from an environmentally adapted breed or heat tolerant breed, consider the ABS Brangus lineup. Our Brangus lineup is now featured in our Fall 2009 Sire Directory which is available from your local ABS Representative or by calling **1-800-ABS-STUD**.

Brangus Lineup



ABS SEXATION®



LIMESTONE **JUPITER** U449 29AN1753
Unique Calving Ease Sire with a Killer Look



OSU **CURRENCY** 8173 29AN1749
Easy Money Phenotype



WOODHILL **FORESIGHT** 29AN1589
Power and Maternal Carcass Sire



CB **HOMBRE** 541T3 29BN0020
Performance, Soundness and Excellent Disposition



CRC **SPECIALIST** 392T2 29BN0018
No Miss Calving Ease Genetics



SPARKS **TREND** 2007 29HP0912
Starting a New Trend

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SHF RIB EYE M326 R117 29HP0906
True Pasture to Plate Genetics



SAND RANCH HAND 29SM0391
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Breed



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Unique Options for Feeder Cattle Marketing

ABS has had a relationship with Big Blue Sale Barn (BBSB) for a couple of years now. ABS Marketing Specialists represent customer cattle on this unique internet auction. This relationship allows ABS customers with superior cattle a chance to expose those cattle to a larger audience of value-added buyers. Jim Barta, owner of Big Blue Sale Barn discussed his unique marketing system with us.

Starting a new cattle marketing company from scratch is a pretty bold move in this economy. Can you explain how, why and when?

Barta: I started Big Blue Sale Barn to give producers a more competitive marketing platform which allows them to have more control over their livestock sales. There was a need in the marketplace to connect buyers and sellers. The “eBay-type” of auction seemed to be the most efficient way to get it accomplished. We have live internet auction sales every two or three weeks, depending on the season. The auction sales are held on Thursdays. From Monday through Wednesday of the sale week, bidders can bid and buyers can sell much like happens on eBay. The top reputation cattle frequently are bought/sold before the auction sale.



By partnering with Power Genetics (PG), we automatically had an established network of people providing top quality Age and Sourced Verified cattle.

Our first sale was October 4, 2007. We started that sale with 6,640 head of cattle. Because of our partnership with Power Genetics and ABS, we have dramatically increased our volume. Today, our listings are equally split between PG and ABS Representatives. We feel that we have the best product available with top quality genetics and reputable marketing specialists.

I have also learned that high quality cattle will top the market only if they are presented to the right buyers. That’s why I started Big Blue Sale Barn.

Jim, you also feed cattle. Why do you use Big Blue to purchase those, and what are you looking for?

Barta: Sorting the really good cattle from a massive video sale offering is not very easy. Believe me, I’ve tried it. We started Big Blue with hand-picked Marketing Specialists from Power Genetics and ABS who (I figured) should know where the really good cattle are because, in large measure, their genetics are in those herds. As a cattle feeder, I simply have more confidence that the cattle being presented to me on Big Blue are a cut above the commodity.





I believe that the confidence I have in the people and the cattle is also felt by the other feeders who shop on Big Blue. Having a high percentage of repeat customers from sale-to-sale is evidence of that.

What am I looking for as a cattle feeder? First, I'm looking for a producer who takes pride in his cattle and clearly has a health plan, a breeding plan, a good management plan and, ideally, some performance and carcass data. I

want cattle that are worth what I pay for them. I'd rather buy good cattle from professional producers with a track record I can count on. We have a sale every two or three weeks depending on the season.

Big Blue Sale Barn sales have a crowd of regulars like any other sale barn in the country, but this set of regulars aren't there for the gossip. These regulars are feedlots that are part of the Power Genetics group. Jason Anderson of Power Genetics tells how Big Blue Sale Barn helps them find the cattle that work in their system.

Why are you connected to Big Blue Sale Barn?

Anderson: We are connected to Big Blue Sale Barn because Jim Barta, owner of BBSB, and I shared the same vision of having an internet auction with an "eBay like" platform to link potential buyers to the highest quality, documented cattle in America.



Power Genetics has a need for a fairly specific type of calf – can you describe your needs and why they are needed?

Anderson: Power Genetics is a supply coordination company that needs a year around supply of high performing calves both at the feed yard and at the CMS (Cargill Meat Solutions) Fort Morgan packing plant. We've found that the mix of 1/4 continental and 3/4 English breeding programs are the most likely to hit our performance parameters.

The ability to get feedlot performance as well as carcass is pretty unique – can you tell us how that information is available to producers? Why do you offer this?

Anderson: For \$2/hd on all calves marketed through Power Genetics we can provide individual measured carcass data that includes ADG, morbidity, mortality, carcass weight, carcass type, quality grade, vision yield grade, vision rib eye size, EBF% and individual animal dollars. This process is done by marrying up the ranch tag to our matched set vid/eid tags to the carcass number assigned at the plant.

How important is the guy who represents the cattle for the producer on Big Blue Sale Barn for you when you are buying cattle?

Anderson: The person representing the cattle for the producer on the BBSB is nearly as important as the quality of the ranch's product that he's selling. This is because the cattle industry is built on trust and with everything that we guarantee delivery on in our process, we have to have quality grass root marketing representatives.

Going forward what will be the key ingredients in calves that go into your system?

Anderson: Keys for the calves that go into our system is that we continue to focus on our vision statement of "We Begin With The End In Mind". What I meant by that is we want specific genetically pioneered cattle that have met our health, nutrition and auditing requirements; pretty well insuring our sellers with a above average fair price and our buyers with demand for their finished product.

ABS has been offering Age and Source Verification services for several years and recently began to help customers market cattle through the Big Blue Sale Barn. Merlyn Sandbulte, ABS District Sales Manager and Joe Jones, ABS Area Sales Manager answered a couple questions for us related to marketing calves on Big Blue Sale Barn.

You have had a fair bit of success getting cattle listed and sold on BBSB – what are the keys in your mind to a good listing?

Sandbulte: A seller who knows the market - A "Buy Now Price" (a price expectation) placed by the seller that makes sense as it relates to location, weigh up conditions and preparation of the cattle. Good genetics of course makes a lot of difference.

Jones: I thought Merlyn did a good job answering the question, the only thing I would add to the answer is a good listing to me starts with program cattle - quality cattle that have a program behind them including genetic health, all naturals and ASV (age and source verified). It is nice to offer a listing that is attractive to all markets, little things such as implants can reduce the number of potential buyers.

There are sales throughout the year, do you see any reason to market at any particular time?

Sandbulte: Based on historical futures data yearlings should sell in August. The best time varies year to year but the poorest time is typically October and early November when bawling calves flood the market.

Jones: If it were my own cattle I was marketing, I would sell before the end of July. Historically, the closer you get to fall deliveries the more the market starts to soften.

Why do you feel having the ability to offer this service sets ABS and its Representatives apart from the rest of the A.I. industry?

Sandbulte: As ABS personnel gain experience and participate in this real world market for calves, the effects of our participation in price discovery should cause all ABS Reps and employees to be more valuable to the industry. ABS personnel will be more valuable for both seedstock and commercial producers in offering genetics and reproductive services that make producers more money and create a more efficient beef industry.

Jones: I would have to say that it allows us to relate to the commercial industry more, which in reality is the end user of all genetics and the one that dominates our food chain. Working with them to sell their calves helps us learn more about the genetics required to make them and the feedlots more money. Marketing their calves is something near and dear to them, they work all year to develop this product, and if I can assist them in achieving a better price for the genetics I am providing them with, then we truly see the value of those genetics.

ABS is uniquely positioned to help its customers get the most from the genetics they have put into their cattle. Through superior proven genetics, feeder cattle marketing and age and source verification, ABS Marketing Specialists can help put you in contact with parties interested in cattle that are better than average. ■



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Heat detect & AI

HEAT DETECT & TIME AI (TAI)

Select Synchron + CIDR® & TAI
Heat detect and AI day 6 to 10 and TAI all non-responders 72-84 hr after PG with GnRH at TAI

Select Synchron + CIDR® & TAI
Heat detect and AI day 7 to 10 and TAI all non-responders 72-84 hr after PG with GnRH at TAI

FIXED-TIME AI (TAI)*

7-day CO-Synch + CIDR®
Perform TAI at 60 to 66 hr after PG with GnRH at TAI

5-day CO-Synch + CIDR®
Perform TAI at 72 ± 2 hr after 1st PG with GnRH at TAI. Two injections of PG 8 ± 2 hr apart are required for this protocol.

COMPARISON OF PROTOCOLS

HEAT DETECTION
Select Synchron
Select Synchron + CIDR®

HEAT DETECT & TAI
Select Synchron
Select Synchron + CIDR®
(TAI non-responders 72-84 hr after PG)
(TAI non-responders 72-84 hr after PG)

FIXED-TIME AI (TAI)
7-day CO-Synch + CIDR®
(TAI 60 to 66 hr after PG)
5-day CO-Synch + CIDR®
(TAI 72 ± 2 hr after 1st PG)

*The times listed are approximate and on the number of days.

GnRH, CIDR®, Cystorelin®, Factrel®, Estrumate®, In-Synch®, Lutalyse®, Prostaglandin F2α, and estroPLAN®



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