



Q&A

With the Angus-specific DNA test for commercial cattle ready to launch, CAB and AGI provide program details in a question-and-answer format.

by **STEVE SUTHER**

What is GeneMax™?

An Angus-specific DNA tool for commercial cattle, GeneMax can help producers profitably increase the supply of cattle qualifying for the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand. Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) and Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) partnered with Pfizer Animal Genetics to develop the value-priced genomic test. GeneMax (GMX) is designed for evaluating high-percentage (>75%) Angus females and feeder cattle on the two traits most specific to hitting the CAB brand target: marbling and postweaning gain.

Why is CAB entering the genomics arena?

The Supply Development Division of CAB is charged with continually working to help Angus producers increase their ability and incentive to qualify cattle for the brand. Research proves the more CAB branded product sold, the more it fulfills its mission of adding value to registered Angus cattle. That's why continued growth of supply is critical.

Marbling, the top reason Angus-type cattle fail to meet CAB requirements, is highly heritable; therefore, significant progress can be made through genetic selection. Fitting into both the CAB "Best Practices" strategy and the American Angus Association's Long-Range Plan to provide genomic tools to commercial users of registered Angus bulls, the CAB Board of Directors sees GMX as a logical step in the evolution of supply development efforts.

What are the benefits of GMX to the Association membership?

In addition to growing supply for the CAB brand, GMX is a value-added service for the membership of the American Angus Association and, specifically, their registered bull customers. Being Angus-specific, GMX provides another feature to commercial cattlemen with high-percentage Angus herds. Not only does the test have the potential to add value to commercial females sired by Angus bulls, but it allows feedyard managers to realize the added value of high-percentage Angus feeder cattle in line with achieving CAB grid premiums.

Who is the target user of GeneMax?

The target user is commercial cattlemen with an Angus-based cow

herd using registered Angus bulls. Cattle feeders partnering on progeny from these herds comprise another potential set of users.

How will commercial cattlemen use the test?

GMX gives cattlemen another tool to make selection and marketing decisions, beginning as early as the first day of a calf's life. Replacement heifer candidates can be tested and the results incorporated with other selection criteria to determine which females should be retained in the herd. Potentially, the entire cow herd can be tested and GMX results used as a guide for mating decisions. In addition, feeder cattle can be tested and results used as a management and marketing tool for capturing added value.

How will the GMX results be communicated?

The genomic results will be applied to economic weighting factors for quality grade and feedlot gain values. For each animal tested, a GMX Score ranging from 1 to 100 (marbling and gain combined) will be provided, along with a separate set of percentile-based values from 1 to 5 for each of the two traits. Visit www.cabpartners.com for reporting examples.

Will the GMX test results enter into EPD calculations?

Because of the targeted nature of its features — regarding the trait offering and the scope of markers, as well as the commercial Angus and Angus-influenced populations of defined use — GMX predictions are not integrated into American Angus Association genomic-enhanced EPDs and should not be used on registered animals. The tool is not intended to replace any of the existing DNA products on the market for use in characterizing registered Angus cattle.

How does a commercial producer order the tests, and what is the cost?

Tests will be ordered through the AAA Login at the American Angus Association website, www.angus.org. Commercial cattlemen with a registered and transferred Angus bull will use their affiliate code and obtain a password from the Association. Cattle feeders or others who may need a code and password may contact the Association at 816-383-5100.

The cost is \$17 per head.

What type of sample is required?

Blood is the preferred sample to run the GMX test, but other types of samples are acceptable. Examples and order forms of approved collection devices are available on the web.

Where can I find more information on GMX?

Visit www.cabpartners.com or call the CAB office at 1-800-225-2333.

