

DNA Test for Gain, Grade Available Soon

Value-based tool will help commercial producers better select, manage Angus cattle.

by

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A new DNA test for marbling and postweaning growth will soon help cattle producers better hit the high-quality beef target.

The tool, called GeneMax™, will be made available in early 2012 under a development

agreement between Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) and Pfizer Animal Genetics, the companies announced. Exclusive marketing rights are reserved for Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), in line with the company's continuing effort to increase the supply of cattle for the brand. AGI and CAB are subsidiaries of the American Angus Association.

The test is being designed for use on high-percentage, commercial Angus cattle sired by registered bulls, according to AGI President Bill Bowman. "It should provide a valuable tool to increase the precision of selection decisions at the ranch, as well as differentiating value for the feedlot," he said.

Test results will take the form of an index, which is being finalized, said Mark McCully, CAB assistant vice president for supply.

"There have been lots of advancements in the purebred cattle industry utilizing DNA for selection," Bowman said. "But this will be the first test at a price point that is economically feasible for commercial cattlemen. The American Angus Association, its subsidiaries and Pfizer Animal Genetics are excited to partner on bringing this technology to market for the users of Angus genetics."



Scott Bormann, business director, Pfizer Animal Genetics, says the development of this product is another example of the strategic partnership between the companies.

"We appreciate the American Angus Association and its affiliates continuing to foster innovation in the field of genetic evaluation," Bormann said. "The forward-thinking collaboration should result in a DNA test that helps continue to advance genomic use and application in the Angus breed, as well as meet consumer demand for high-quality beef."

McCully unveiled the product to Angus producers at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in Louisville, Ky., in mid-November and to commercial cattlemen gathered for the Range Beef Cow Symposium in Mitchell, Neb., in late November.

"This is going to allow for more accurate replacement heifer selection and targeted management in feeding Angus cattle," he said. "With demand for high-quality beef at an all-time high, commercial cattlemen will soon gain a greater ability to identify those cattle most able to access premiums in that marketplace."

The test kits will be ordered through AGI and will cost \$15-\$20 per test. The samples are returned to AGI and sent to Pfizer Animal Genetics for genotyping. AGI will provide test results to the customer.

Look for more information in the trade show at the 2012 Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show in Nashville, Tenn., Feb. 1-4.

Editor's Note: Steve Suther is industry information director for Certified Angus Beef LLC.



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