



# Your Link to

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## That's what I'm talkin' about!

There's a popular acclamation heard so often today that it has become a clichéd bit of fun. Who said it first or made it famous is unclear. What is clear is that when something good happens at just the right time, it is hard for many people to resist shouting it out.

When a cattle feeder gets a pen closeout that reveals a 3.6-pound (lb.) average daily gain (ADG), a dry-matter (DM) conversion of 5.5 lb. of feed to 1 lb. of gain, and a

grid premium of \$6 over the cash market, you might hear it: "That's what I'm talkin' about!"

More than just good luck is involved, however, for cattle to reach these targets. They have to have the right genetics, be managed and fed correctly, and be marketed to their full potential.

### Angus influence

Detailed data collected from more than 12,000 head of cattle enrolled in

the Certified Angus Beef LCC (CAB) Feedlot-Licensing Program (FLP) in 2005 tell the story. High-percentage Angus cattle on feed perform as well, if not better, than those with the least amount of Angus influence.

This is only the latest in a growing body of evidence that the Angus breed provides the right genetics at every phase of production.

First, CAB acceptance rates increase as Angus influence increases. Nationwide, CAB acceptance

has averaged about 15% of all predominantly black-hided cattle in the harvest mix. The CAB database shows calves that are solely Angus-sired hit the target at 27.5%, and those that are primarily Angus-sired rate 18.7% acceptance (see Table 1). By comparison, calves sired by Brangus bulls show a 10.6% rate, other breed sires on Angus-based cows net 13.8% acceptance, while unknown sires qualify at 11.3%.

*(Continued on page 22)*

**Table 1: Effect of sire breed on CAB acceptance rates**

	Sire breed				
	Solely Angus	Predominantly Angus	Brangus	Other breed	Unknown
CAB acceptance rate, %	27.5 <sup>a</sup>	18.7 <sup>b</sup>	10.6 <sup>b</sup>	13.8 <sup>b</sup>	11.3 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a,b</sup>Means with unlike superscripts differ (P < 0.01)

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**Your Link to CAB** (from page 20)**Table 2: Effect of dam breed on CAB acceptance rates**

	Dam breed			
	Straight Angus	Angus-based	Non-Angus	Unknown
CAB acceptance rate, %	28.4 <sup>a</sup>	19.5 <sup>b</sup>	5.9 <sup>a,b</sup>	15.0 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a,b</sup>Means with unlike superscripts differ (P <0.01).

Similarly, calves weaned from straight Angus cows (see Table 2) have a CAB acceptance rate of 28.4%; Angus-based cows net 19.5%; non-Angus, only 5.9%; and unknown breed cows, 15.0%.

These figures point to real dollars for those who use the Angus breed and sell to packers. CAB-licensed packers have paid out more than \$200 million in CAB premiums over the past 10 years.

**Differences, or not**

The FLP 2005 database was also broken down into CAB acceptance rate groups of 0% to 9.9%, 10% to 19.9%, 20% to 29.9% and those with greater than 30% CAB acceptance rates. The feedlot and carcass performance data were analyzed to measure and note any differences.

In the feedlot, there were no differences in ADG or feed efficiency (pounds of DM fed per pound of gain) among all groups (see Table 3). ADGs ran a very narrow range of 3.23 lb. per day to 3.33 lb. per day, and the highest gains actually came from the group with more than 30% CAB acceptance. Although not statistically significant, it does show that we don't sacrifice performance for quality grade.

Likewise, feed efficiencies were not different among CAB acceptance rate groups, ranging from 6:1 feed-to-gain to 6:4. Days on feed were similar, with a range of 158 days to 177 days. Again, although not significant, higher CAB acceptance rates meant a few more days on feed, increasing from 158 to 168 to 174, and finally to 177 from lowest acceptance rates to highest. All the cattle in the study averaged nearly 700 lb. coming into the feedlot and left weighing an average of 1,200 lb.

So far, the news is positive, but it may not elicit an exclamation of affirmation.

Looking at cost of gain might provide the stimulus, however (see Table 3). Cattle with the lowest cost of gain were in the greater-than-30% CAB acceptance group. The cost of a pound of gain for the high-end cattle was 47.56¢, while those with less than 10% CAB acceptance rates cost 50.08¢ per lb. to feed. The two "middle groups" averaged 48.59¢ per lb. of gain.

At the packing plants, carcass weights and dressing percentages were not different (see Table 4). All cattle averaged near 63% dress, and carcass weights across the board ranged from 772 lb. to 791 lb.

Measured in fractions of an inch, external fat thickness between the 12th and 13th rib ran 0.51, 0.52, 0.60 and 0.56 in. for the CAB acceptance rate groups in ascending order. There was a significant difference between the 20%-29.9% group and both the <10% and 10%-19.9% groups. However, there was not a significant difference in external fat thickness between the top

and bottom groups.

Ribeye area tended to get smaller as CAB acceptance rates increased, but the range from top to bottom was only 0.39 square inches (sq. in.). All groups had smaller-than-average ribeye areas, however.

Implants have an effect on marbling scores, which is the primary determinant of quality grade. In this study, number of times implanted and “aggressiveness” of the implant program affected marbling scores and, thus, CAB acceptance rates.

Cattle in the lowest acceptance-rate group were implanted an average of 1.3 times, while those in the highest acceptance-rate group were implanted only 0.9 times. Implant programs were assigned average potency scores and multiplied by the number of times implanted. It was clear that the most aggressive programs reduced quality grade and CAB acceptance rates.

“Out” cattle, or those with one of several defects [dark cutters, Yield Grade (YG) 4 and 5, hard bones, heavy and light carcasses] were highest for the 20%-29.9% group at 19% defects. The other three groups were not significantly different and averaged about 10.5%. The YG 4 and 5 carcasses were by far the largest group of “outs.”

To summarize, feeding high-

percentage Angus cattle results in more CAB premiums for the feeder. Cattle with high CAB acceptance rates perform similarly and, in some cases, better than

low-acceptance cattle in the feedlot and on the rail. If you have the choice of the right genetics with the same performance but more premiums, why would anyone

feed anything else?  
That’s what I’m talkin’ about!



**Table 3: Feedlot performance by CAB-acceptance-rate group**

	CAB-acceptance-rate groups			
	0%-9.9%	10.0%-19.9%	20.0%-29.9%	>30.0%
In wt., lb.	726.8	708.5	671.7	669.0
Final wt., lb.	1,235.8	1,245.9	1,242.4	1,223.2
Days on feed	158	168	174	177
Avg. daily gain, lb.	3.31	3.23	3.36	3.33
Lb. feed/lb. gain	6.19	6.19	6.17	6.43
Cost of gain, ¢/lb.	50.08	48.59	48.59	47.56

**Table 4: Carcass characteristics by CAB-acceptance-rate group**

	CAB-acceptance-rate groups			
	0%-9.9%	10.0%-19.9%	20.0%-29.9%	>30.0%
Hot carcass wt., lb.	781.1	791.5	782.4	772.3
Dressing %	63.20	63.24	62.97	63.13
Fat thickness, in.	0.51 <sup>a</sup>	0.52 <sup>a</sup>	0.60 <sup>b</sup>	0.56 <sup>a,b</sup>
REA, sq. in.	13.17	13.10	12.90	12.78
Marbling score*	1,000 <sup>a</sup>	1,030 <sup>b</sup>	1,063 <sup>c</sup>	1,102 <sup>d</sup>
% YG 4 & 5	11.3	9.9	19.1	11.0

\*900 = Slight<sup>o</sup>; 1,000 = Small<sup>o</sup>; 1,100 = Modest<sup>o</sup>; 1,200 = Moderate<sup>o</sup>, etc.

<sup>a,b,c,d</sup>Means with unlike superscripts differ (P <0.05).