



The Angus Link

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What's a good bull worth?

Adding value to your product starts with genetic selection decisions. In life we are faced with many decisions. To make those decisions we must have the proper knowledge to make an informed decision. We can find this in every aspect of our lives — from the food we eat each day to the cars we purchase.

Recently, I had the option to jump out of an airplane at 10,000 feet (ft.), something most people of sound mind would just laugh at. When a choice like this arises, it is best to close your eyes and jump. Selecting bulls for a breeding season is not one of those times.

When making genetic selection decisions, producers should use every possible means to improve their genetics. The American Angus

Association has expected progeny differences (EPDs) available to assist in those decisions.

EPDs are a tool to make directional genetic change in traits of interest. In the example below, differences in bull value can be seen using EPDs and evaluating the economic effect of weaning weight (WW). Bull 1 has WW +40 and Bull 2 has WW +20 (see Fig. 1). The difference in the weaning weight of Bull 1 and Bull 2 is 20 pounds (lb.) (40 – 20). On the average we would expect the calves by Bull 1 to be 20 lb. heavier at weaning than the calves sired by Bull 2.

This assumes both bulls are mated to comparable females and are exposed to the same environmental conditions. Beyond this point, let's take the example a step further and relate some economic assumptions to the comparison (see Fig. 1).

This exercise can give a producer an idea of the economic value associated with using EPDs and comparing Bull 1 to Bull 2. Selecting Bull 1 instead of Bull 2 for a breeding season is a good investment, keeping in mind this assumption focuses only on weaning weight differences in the progeny sired by the two bulls and does not take into consideration additional expenses involved in raising the heavier calf. This is a very good example of using the EPDs provided when making genetic selection decisions for sires.

Yes, I did decide to close my eyes and jump out of a perfectly good airplane at 10,500 ft. In the end, I enjoyed the scenery of the Rocky Mountains and the rush of the cool air on my face. If you take the time to consider the genetic selection tools the Association has provided, you can enjoy the benefits of increased profitability in your operation.

Fig. 1: Weaning weight effect

	Bull 1	Bull 2
BW EPD, lb.	+3	+3
WW EPD, lb.	+40	+20
Milk EPD, lb.	+16	+16
YW EPD, lb.	+80	+80

Assumptions:

- 67 commercial cows and two herd bulls
- 90% calf crop average (per cow exposed)
- Sell all calves at weaning
- Feeder-calf price at \$1.15 per lb.
- Use bulls for five years
- Bull 1 has weaning weight EPD of +40 lb.
- Bull 2 has weaning weight EPD of +20 lb.

Bull 1	Bull 2
30 calves at 570 lb. \$98,325	30 calves at 550 lb. \$94,875

Projected gross value difference = \$3,450 total during the five-year period.

Sale dates announced for AngusSource®-tagged calves

To assist Angus producers in capturing added value from their participation in AngusSource®, the American Angus Association announces several fall sale dates. These scheduled sales will group AngusSource-tagged calves as well as other age- and source-verified calves.

Current industry reports document that premiums of \$15-\$25 per head are being realized for age- and source-verified cattle. Reports indicate the genetic verification of Angus calves, such as AngusSource, are adding an additional \$30 per head* more than non-Angus calves. In addition, AngusSource-tagged calves have the opportunity to qualify for *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) regardless of hide color.

Numerous AngusSource value-added feeder calf sales are scheduled in several states. The sale dates and locations include:

Oct. 20	Fort Scott Livestock Market, Fort Scott, Kan.
Oct. 22	Pratt Livestock Inc., Pratt, Kan.
Oct. 26	Saint Onge Livestock Co., Saint Onge, S.D.
Oct. 29	Faith Livestock Commission Co., Faith, S.D.
Oct. 29	Pratt Livestock Inc., Pratt, Kan.
Nov. 1	Russell Livestock Exchange, Russell, Kan.
Nov. 5	Pratt Livestock Inc., Pratt, Kan.
Nov. 10	Fort Scott Livestock Market, Fort Scott, Kan.
Nov. 12	Pratt Livestock Inc., Pratt, Kan.
Nov. 13	Woodward Livestock Auction, Woodward, Okla.
Nov. 16	Woodward Livestock Auction, Woodward, Okla.
Dec. 6	Russell Livestock Exchange, Russell, Kan.

Participating livestock auction markets are currently taking consignments for calves that qualify for these sales. For further information, contact Ty Groshans, American Angus Association director of commercial programs, at tgroshans@angus.org or 816-383-5193.

***Source:** Here's the Premium study represents 236,889 calves sold as 10,850 lots from 10 states from 1999 to 2006.

