

## SIRE SELECTION: WHAT IS THE BEST FIT FOR MY OPERATION?

*By: Clinton Lafflin, Midway Extension District Livestock Agent*



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## BIG PICTURE ITEMS

1. Do business with breeders you know and trust that manage cattle in a similar way to you.
2. No "Silver Bullet" herd sire exists, in other words, what may work for your neighbor across the fence, may not work for you.
3. Don't judge a book by it's cover, meaning don't single trait select a bull only by it's EPD profile, catalog picture or video, or pedigree. Use a combination of everything available to you. Take time to evaluate bulls in person!
4. If you keep replacements study a potential herd sire's dam, maternal or full siblings, and the breeder's cowherd in general to determine if these genetics would work in your program.
5. Just because an EPD ranks in the top 10% of the breed, does not necessarily mean it's beneficial for you!
6. A cow should easily give birth to a calf that is 8% of her own body weight. Example 8% of a 1,200 cow= 96 pound calf, so birthweight/calving ease especially on cow bulls is not as critical as it is when you are buying heifer bulls.

**Number of live calves and pounds produced are how we are paid so find the right balance for your operation.**

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## BEFORE BIDDING ON A BULL

### 1. Determine Operational Goals

1. Marketing Plan and Timing?
2. Keeping or Buying Replacements?
3. Available Labor Force?
4. Will you AI, turn bulls out, or combination of both?
5. Available forage and feed resources, and calving environment?
6. When do I breed cows, and when do I calve? When do I need to have my bull battery ready to go?
7. Will I utilize crossbreeding, or maintain a primarily breed based operation?
8. Adjust annual bull buying budget based on revenue/expenses and current needs.

### 2. Find the right Seedstock Supplier

1. STUDY different operations, tour their place, cowherds etc. to ensure this supplier produces cattle that fit your goals at the time you need them.
2. What services does this supplier offer?
  1. This could include: Calf-crop marketing assistance or buy back program, free bull delivery, or a first breeding season guarantee on bulls.
3. Make sure the bulls selling come with a PASSED Breeding Soundness Exam/Semen check by an accredited vet.
4. Do I know and trust this person to do right by me as their customer?
5. Buy from those you know and trust, a handshake still matters!

**This process takes time, adapt and change as necessary.**

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## EVALUATING BULLS

1. Congratulations, you've done your homework and found a supplier you trust and you are looking to attend a sale, now what?
  1. If at all possible please take the time to go through bulls in person prior to bidding. Remember a herd sire can influence genetics present in a given cowherd by over 85% at a given time, so these decisions are critical!
  2. Phenotype: evaluate structure and movement, testicular development, muscle shape, body capacity, and overall eye appeal.
    1. If keeping replacements, study dam production records, age of dam, and phenotype of dam/maternal sisters to make sure they fit your needs.
    2. If feeding cattle past weaning, does the bull I'm buying have a genetic history of success in producing cattle that excel in feedlot or on the rail? Ask the breeder for their records, or kill data
  3. Does the Genotype/DNA meet my operational needs and goals.
    1. Calving Ease vs. Growth etc.
    2. Look at Breed Percentile Ranks, NOT individual numbers.
  4. Environment: Are these bulls nutritionally developed in a way that is conducive to my environment?
    1. Milking Ability of daughters versus available feed and labor resources
    2. Will my purchased bull "melt" when I get him home or be ready to go to work?
  5. Remember that EPDS are NOT the same across breeds.

**Develop your own selection criteria when buying bulls, it may or may not be different from others and that's ok.**

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## EVALUATION IN A PEN



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## UNDERSTANDING EPDS

### --Remember--

Not all EPDS will not fit your operational goals, and vary from breed to breed. Contact your breed of interest's association for specific help. Here are a few major EPDS to consider from the American Angus Association.

**Calving Ease Direct (CED)**, is expressed as a difference in percentage of unassisted births, with a higher value indicating greater calving ease in first-calf heifers. It predicts the average difference in ease with which a sire's calves will be born when he is bred to first-calf heifers.

**Birth Weight EPD (BW)**, expressed in pounds, is a predictor of a sire's ability to transmit birth weight to his progeny compared to that of other sires.

**Weaning Weight EPD (WW)**, expressed in pounds, is a predictor of a sire's ability to transmit weaning growth to his progeny compared to that of other sires.

**Yearling Weight EPD (YW)**, expressed in pounds, is a predictor of a sire's ability to transmit yearling growth to his progeny compared to that of other sires.

**Maternal Milk EPD (Milk)**, is a predictor of a sire's genetic merit for milk and mothering ability as expressed in his daughters compared to daughters of other sires. In other words, it is that part of a calf's weaning weight attributed to milk and mothering ability.

**Can your feed resources or environment handle higher EPDS/selection decisions? Remember many EPDS are used to directly compare sires, and that EPDs update weekly, so don't get in the habit of selecting based off one number.**

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## COMPARING POTENTIAL HERD SIRES

Birth Date: 11/09/2019 Tattoo: 9960  
 Parentage: SNP Genomic: Angus GS  
 Parents Qualified  
 Breeder: 1069157 - Clinton Lewis Laflin, Russell KS  
 Owner(s): 1069157 - Clinton Lewis Laflin, Russell KS

	R B Active Duty 010	LCC New Standard AAA **14218253
		AAA **14718300
		BA Lady 6807 305
		AAA **15679812
North Camp Silver Star 5103	AAA *18162044	WK Pow-Wow AAA *16447252
	Malsons Jilt 13Z	AAA *17251674
		Laflins Jilt 8302
		AAA *16419721
		AAA 6233033
	C R R Emulous 26 17	AAA #7682162 (REF)
		C R R Emulous Royal Lady
		AAA 6553431
North Camp Galaxie 0530	AAA +17604130	Papa Durabull 9805
		AAA #11294115
	Laflins Orphan Annie 110	AAA +13983250
		Laflins Sunset Galaxie 369
		AAA 12036204

# Pathfinder + Embryo Transplant \* Parents Qualified

EPD Percentiles

Production											Ma
CED	BW	WW	YW	RADG	DMI	YH	SC	HP	CEM	Milk	
Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Prog	Prog	Prog	Prog	Prog	Prog	Prog	Prog	Daus	Daus	Daus	
+2	+2.0	+48	+75	+19	-23	+5	+73	+12.2	+10	+21	
.30	.46	.40	.35	.26	.26	.39	.35	.15	.24	.27	
85%	70%	80%	90%	90%	2%	55%	55%	40%	35%	80%	

Click here to show/hide Management EPD Section

Management
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Angus EPD Breed Averages for Non-Parent Sires, Spring 2021:

BW:1.2 WW:57 YW:100 Milk: +25 Source: American Angus Association

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## COMPARING POTENTIAL HERD SIRES

Birth Date: 02/02/2020 Tattoo: 0061  
 Parentage: SNP Genomic: Angus GS  
 Breeder: 1069157 - Clinton Lewis Laflin, Russell KS  
 Owner(s): 1069157 - Clinton Lewis Laflin, Russell KS

	Connealy Capitalist 028	S A V Final Answer 0035 AAA #13592905 (REF)
		AAA #16752262 (REF)
		Prides Pita of Conanga 8821
		AAA 16204878
LD Capitalist 316	AAA +17666102 (REF)	C A Future Direction 5321 AAA 14407230
		AAA 12493607 (REF)
	LD Dixie Erica 2053	LD Dixie Erica Oar 0853
		AAA 13876953
		R B Active Duty 010
		AAA **16718300
	North Camp Silver Star 5103	AAA *18162044
		Malsons Jilt 13Z
		AAA +17251674
MK Queen F22	AAA 19415759	Kramers Apollo 317
		AAA #17668327
	Barstow Queen D16	AAA +18551493
		AAA 17138019
		Barstow Queen W16
		AAA 17138019

# Pathfinder + Embryo Transplant \* Parents Qualified

EPD Percentiles

Production											Ma
CED	BW	WW	YW	RADG	DMI	YH	SC	HP	CEM	Milk	
Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	Acc	
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Prog	Prog	Prog	Prog	Prog	Prog	Prog	Prog	Daus	Daus	Daus	
+9	+9	+67	+120	+25	+1.43	+9	+1.61	+10.3	+15	+26	
.33	.48	.41	.37	.31	.31	.42	.39	.23	.29	.30	
30%	45%	20%	20%	40%	85%	15%	10%	65%	2%	40%	

Angus EPD Breed Averages for Non-Parent Sires, Spring 2021:

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## WHICH BULL DO YOU BUY?

1. One of these bulls is out of a 10 year old 2<sup>nd</sup> generation donor cow that serves as the base of my breeding program where I have retained 5 maternal sisters in my herd. This bull's grandmother was in production until the age of 14 and had a calf on time every year in addition to being flushed.
2. The other bull is out of a valuable first calf heifer whose grandmother brought \$40,000 as an aged cow and is the dam of the notable Angus AI Sire Barstow Cash.
3. Both bulls had an actual birth weight of 81 pounds, while one had an adjusted Yearling Weight of 1,125 pounds and the other bull had an adjusted Yearling Weight of 1,294 pounds.
4. One bull has a Milk EPD of +26 while the other bull has a Milk EPD of +21. Which bulls daughters will work better for you?

**Which bull is which? What bull works best for your operation? Which one do you decide to buy?**

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## QUESTIONS??



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