

LEAD IN

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Our staff compared recent issues of another major breed publication and the *Angus Journal*. What they found was surprising and maybe a little bit embarrassing for us.

It seems that out of 68 advertisements of a half-page or more in the competing *Journal*, some 35 ads (51 percent) featured Expected Progeny Difference (EPD) information. Another 15 ads (22 percent) included some other kind of performance information. A total of 73 percent of the ads featured performance data in one form or another.

The comparative issue of the *Angus Journal* contained 73 ads of one-half page size or larger. Of the 73 ads, 15 or 22 percent included EPD information and 14 more (19 percent) listed other performance data. The score on performance data: 43 percent *Angus*-73 percent competition.

Maybe it is a coincidence that an unusually small amount of performance information was contained in that particular issue of the *Angus Journal*. Maybe those 73 *Angus* advertisers just aren't as performance-oriented as the rest of the *Angus* Association membership. Or maybe, despite the American *Angus* Association's leadership role in the industry, the *Angus* business as a whole isn't as interested in performance records, in general, and EPD information, in particular, as many of us would like to think.

I am convinced that the commercial beef cattle industry is rapidly moving toward an understanding of and extensive use of EPD information in their bull selection programs. For agricultural editors EPD has become the "in" thing to write about. Most of the good publications that serve the commercial beef industry have written about EPDs in the past year, and those that haven't are planning to. As I write this, there is a major state farm

publication on my desk with a four-column banner headline that says, "How to take the guesswork out of buying bulls." The subhead reads, "Don't leave the future of your herd to chance. Use the latest information available to make the right decisions." And naturally the story is all about Expected Progeny Differences.

If you had stood with some of us in the *Angus* booth at the National Cattlemen's Assn. convention this year, you would have heard a great deal of discussion about the *Angus* Sire Evaluation Report and EPDs. One cattleman said flatly that he doesn't buy bulls that don't have EPDs that meet his specifications.

As you probably know, the American *Angus* Assn. advertisements this fiscal year have a coupon that readers can use to send for a free copy of the *Angus* Sire Evaluation Report. The program has generated requests from more than 3,000 cattle producers through February. Our advertising agency thinks that this number is just short of phenomenal. At the very least, it means there are some 3,000 potential bull buyers out there looking through the report and hopefully planning their next bull purchases.

If I had my druthers, all *Angus* breeders would use performance information in their advertisements, particularly in those ads that are to be read by commercial cow-calf producers. It is important that the registered *Angus* industry be perceived as the source of specification seedstock. This is possible only if we use performance records effectively in our breeding programs and promote them in our advertising.

The commercial industry is indeed rapidly moving to the EPD concept and the breeds and breeders that have the information and promote its importance will profit the most in the years ahead.

