

COMMERCIAL CATTLEMEN SPEAKOUT

Outstanding producers as selected and honored by the Beef Improvement Federation, our panel addresses two questions:

A. ABOVE ALL, WHAT WOULD YOU PREFER PUREBRED SEED STOCK PRODUCERS KNOW OR DO THAT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL TO YOU AND YOUR FELLOW COMMERCIAL PRODUCERS?

B. HAVE YOU USED ANGUS SEED STOCK IN THE PAST? DO YOU ANTICIPATE USING ANGUS SEED STOCK IN THE FUTURE? YOUR IMPRESSIONS OR EXPECTATIONS?

Our participants: (All BIF Commercial Cattlemen of the Year)

Chan Cooper Three Forks, Mt. 1972
Lloyd Nygard Minot, N.D. 1974
Gene Gates Coldwater, Ks. 1975
Ron Baker Hermiston, Or. 1976

Jess Kilgore Three Forks, Mt. 1980
Henry Gardiner Ashland, Ks. 1981
Sam Hands Garden City, Ks. 1982

Question A . . . Here's what I would like them to know

"Angus purebred stock need to maintain their early maturity which has given them an advantage in quality grade, i.e. Choice grade marbling. They must also maintain their ease of calving breed trait. Economic pressure in the commercial business is for feeders that will produce Choice high-cutability carcasses.

"This is the contribution of the Angus breed in a crossbreeding program. Selection for the extremes that are being shown in the show ring today are leading the breed away from its economic contribution to the beef industry. . . ."

"Above all, what I want to know about a bull before I use him, is what will his calves be like? I have been breeding Angus for 35 years. I know from experience that you cannot tell by looking. You can tell that you do not want to use a bull by looking, but you can have a lot of good-looking bulls that are terrible disappointments when you see their progeny.

"If I am going to use young bulls without progeny to breed cows, I want to know as much as possible about the performance of those young bulls as individuals and the progeny data on all the ancestors of those bulls.

"I want to know their own birth weights, their EPDs for birth weight, EPDs for pure milk, EPDs for yearling weight, and their serving capacity score.

"I also want to know and trust the person I buy that bull from. I do not have to be a close friend of that breeder, but I want to know enough about his reputation to be able to trust that his data was put together carefully and honestly. . . ."

"I believe that seed stock producers need to furnish birth weights as well as 205- and 365-day weights. As for my own herd of commercial Angus cows, I'm getting concerned about cow size.

"My two-year-old heifers that are calving now already weigh about 1,000 pounds. That will make them 1,250-pound cows at five years of age. That's too big for this dry area. . . ."

"Retained ownership is a must in order to capitalize on invested improvements. Producers of seed stock could help their customers and themselves through marketing aids such as providing a list of customers to potential order buyers of top calves and feeders. Or, help them go into a feedlot with their calves and retain ownership.

"The purebred producer might purchase some of his customer's calves to do a follow-up on progeny performance. Producers need to know their customer's operations and needs so as to advise. It would help if associations would standardize their

performance records and breeding values.

"Seed stock producers that can properly advise their commercial customer with match mating information and the like and aid him in a profitable marketing plan will retain a regular customer. Feed efficiency could also use some work. We continually need more performance info and less show ring input. Thanks for caring. . . ."

"I think it would be very helpful for seed stock producers to give the commercial producers some definite facts regarding the efficiency of feed utilization that their breeding stock might inject into the breeding program.

"Measurements and weights have been used for a long time, but we need to know more about what costs are going to be incurred in feeding a given number of animals to a certain size or weight. We've noted that some breeds or crossbreds have great size and frame, but we've also had reports of the greater amount of feed and cost of upkeep of some of those cattle. It also takes longer for some of them to mature. . . ."

"Have records so when I go to purchase a bull I will know: 1) his birth weight, especially for first-calf heifers; 2) his gain on the cow and in the feedlot; 3) if he's raised under rough conditions, as I don't believe in the show ring.

"In short, I want him to climb the highest mountain and be horny when he gets to the top. . . ."

"Crossbred cattle are increasingly the name of the game for the future. This declaration by more and more packers wanting a quarter-inch backfat or less must be addressed. There's still not a very big percentage of our cattle, whether crossbred or straightbred, that will hold the fat to one-quarter inch and still grade Choice.

"Let's quit fighting among ourselves and find where we can complement each other and draw out a market. That's better than chewing on each other in our advertising. . . ."

Five of the seven responding said they had used Angus seed stock in the past and intended to do so in the future. Their replies to

Question B . . . My impressions and expectations of the breed

"The commercial breeder needs cattle that will gain as fast as possible but will have birth weights which will allow his cows or heifers to calve with a minimum of trouble.

"The use of the serving capacity or libido scoring of bulls may be the most important performance trait that has yet been measured. Australia and New Zealand breeders have been using this concept to improve their reproductive efficiency of their cow herds for six to eight years. Our sire evaluation data is greatly superior to theirs, except for this one trait. However, this one trait, that of fertility, is the most important of all performance traits! . . ."

"Angus should hold their position in the commercial herds as the base foundation continues to provide the necessary quality needed from a carcass standpoint.

"The Angus people met the frame challenge, but let's avoid extremes. I feel we need more attention on milking ability, maternal traits, and fleshing ability. Efficiency is the name of the game. . . ."

"I think Angus cattle cross well with other breeds, particularly Charolais and Hereford. The Angus generally have good milk and mothering instincts—traits that are important in raising calves. . . ."

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