MEMBERSHIP TIPS

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Percentile rank

I've read breeder advertisements claiming their animal is in the top 1% for marbling. Can you tell me how they would know that?

The percentile rank value compares expected progeny differences (EPDs) for specific traits among animals within the Angus breed. Values range from 1% to 99%. For example, a bull with a percentile ranking of 5 for marbling means he is in the top 5% of sires in the breed for marbling. If an animal is in the top 1% for a given trait, then the animal is ranked better than 99% of the respective population. If an animal shows a percentile rank of 50 for any given trait, they would be considered breed average for that trait.

EPD percentile tables

Every breed that computes EPDs generates a table breaking down the EPDs into percentile rankings. These tables can be found on our website at Management > Calculators/Tables > Percentile Breakdown, and are sorted by Current Sires, Current Dams, Non-Parent Bulls, and Non-Parent Cows.

At the bottom of each table, you will also see how many animals are included within the data set, along with the breed average for each trait.

By using these tables, seedstock and commercial producers can determine how a bull (or female) ranks within their respective breed for each trait. This information can be extremely valuable, particularly if the breeder is not familiar with EPDs.

Potential for change

One reminder, these percentile rank values have the potential to change as animals with performance information are added to the evaluation, just as EPDs change. When we release the weekly updated EPDs, we anticipate small changes to the individual percentile rankings of animals.

It's important to remember to look at the percentile rankings of these individual animals. Even though your animal may increase or decrease for

Figure 1: *EPD Percentiles*
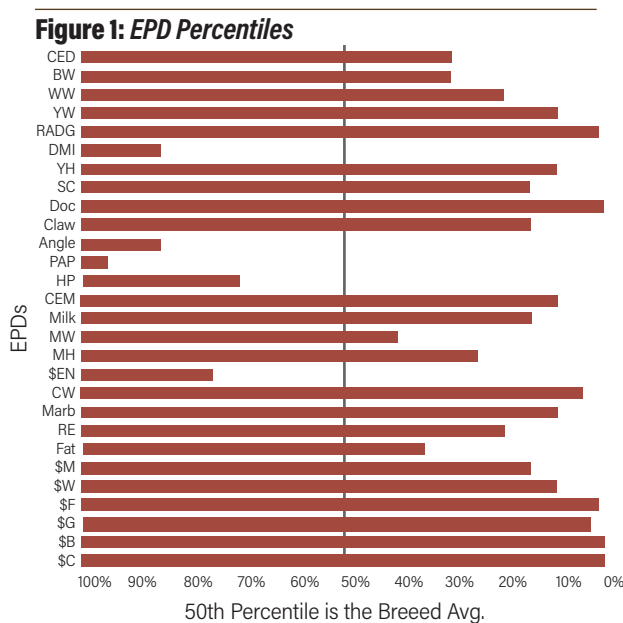
50th Percentile is the Breeed Avg.

Figure 2: *Percentage Breakdown*

a specific trait, it's happening across the entire Angus population.

Selecting for extremes

Knowledge of the percentile table gives you an idea of how an individual ranks within a breed for a specific trait or index. Selection based on extreme percentile rank percentages will move the population in that direction, which can be very advantageous.

However, it may not always be beneficial to choose extreme animals. For example, those animals in the top 1% of the breed for milk may be too high maintenance for your environment, and those animals with a percentile rank of 1 for mature size may be too large.
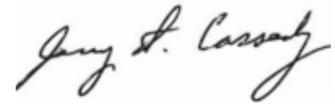
Percentile rank charts

One very useful tool is to access the bar chart for animals on pedigree lookup. Just below the animal's pedigree, you will see the hyperlink "EPD Percentiles". Once you click on the hyperlink, the animal's percentile rank chart will appear (see Figure 1.) In Figure 1, this particular animal would rank in the top 10% for yearling weight EPD.
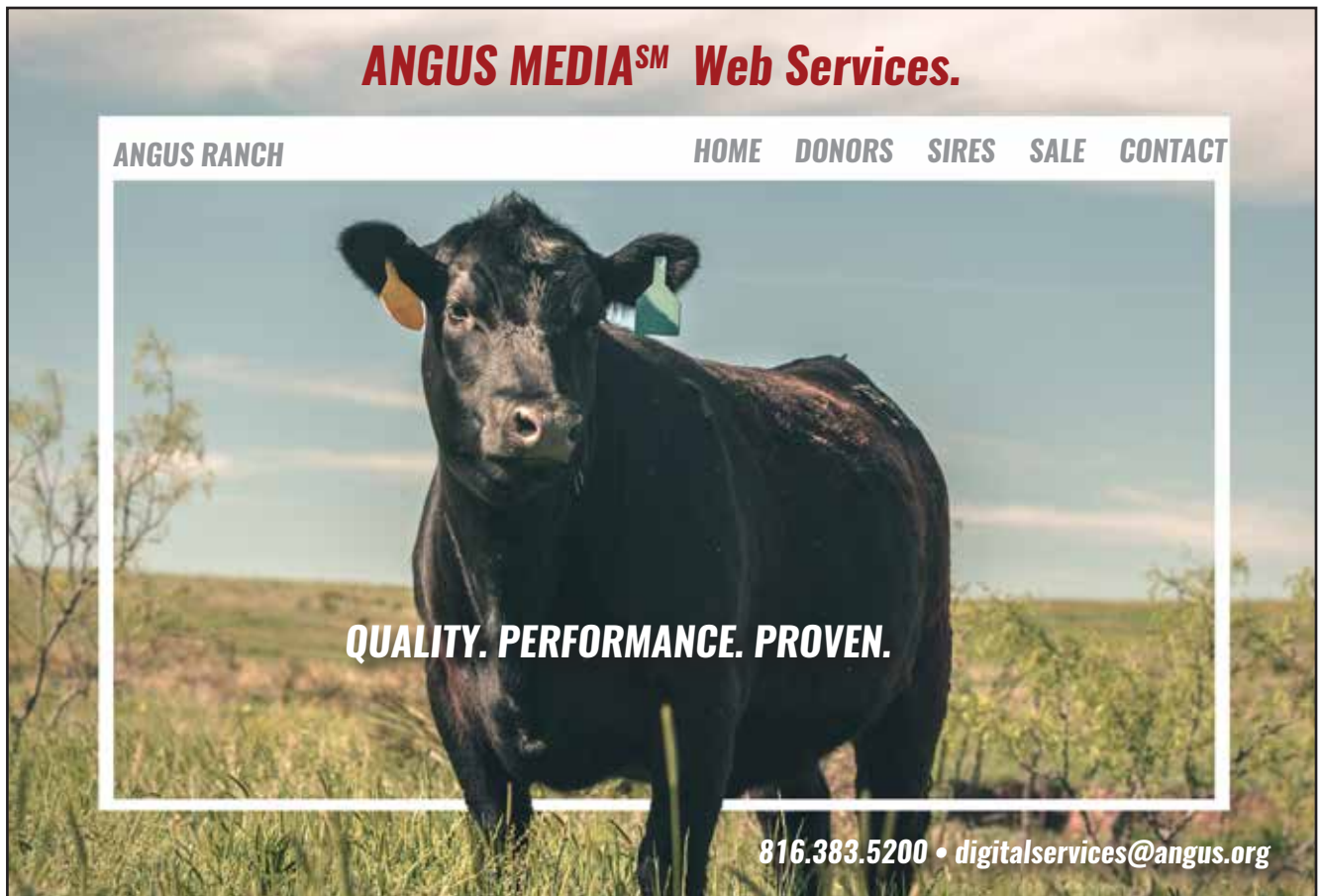
Summary

Utilizing the percentile rank tools available from the American Angus Association to select the next generation of Angus seedstock can be very useful and simplify your selection decisions. AJ

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Editor's note: For more information regarding parentage rank, please contact the American Angus Association Member Services Department at (816) 383-5100 or email me directly at jcassady@angus.org.