

LEAD IN

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National Sire Summaries have an impact today on all segments of the registered and commercial cattle industry. Because of the accuracy and reliability of the data, summaries are used with increasing frequency.

During the past fiscal year the American Angus Assn. received nearly 5,000 requests for the 1986 Report as a result of our national advertising and publicity programs. The Reports were sent free to everyone who requested them, and most requests were from commercial cow-calf producers.

This issue of the *Angus Journal* brings you the 1987 National Angus Sire Evaluation Report. It lists 1,236 bulls for growth and maternal traits and an additional 1,159 bulls in the young sire summary. A special section lists bulls with detailed carcass data. Branded beef programs with their narrow carcass and quality specifications have placed a growing emphasis on predictable carcass-trait performance.

As you evaluate the 1987 Report, and maybe more importantly, as you interpret it to your customers, remember that National Sire Evaluation is best used as a roadmap to help you reach a desired destination or goal. On the other hand, the Report and the figures it presents probably should not be viewed as a contest in which there is a clear cut winner.

Quite often as I talk to registered and commercial cattle breeders they tell me of needs that exist in their particular herds. These needs may be for growth, milk, moderate birth weights, calving ease or a combination of the traits. But every cattle producer does not have the same needs.

The Sire Summary offers the best option available to correct deficiencies and improve overall production through proper sire selection. The Report can help a cattle breeder determine which bulls excel in the traits that are most important to his or her herd.

Not only do herds vary widely in the

traits that are important to them, but not all herds have the same production goals. Bulls that do well in one environment may possess traits that make their offspring unsuited to another set of climatic and production conditions. For example, selection for extremes in growth or milk production in a tough environment with limited feed and resources will likely result in problems. Yet, cattle that maximize milk and growth may be very profitable in areas of moderate climate with an abundance of feed.

For most cattlemen, a balance of traits is the name of the game. Bulls that offer acceptable birth weights, ease of calving, adequate growth and daughters that produce an optimum amount of milk are in heavy demand. Angus has always been a balanced breed and sire summaries help identify the sires that can help maintain this balance.

Not that every bull or every herd should be in some uniform balance. Sire Evaluation can help seed stock producers direct their programs to serve a very specific niche in the industry. For example, light birth weight, ease of calving bulls are in demand for first calf heifers. In some herds, Angus bulls with maximum growth characteristics are in demand for use as terminal sires or for use on mature cows. Another option is using bulls that are high in maternal traits to correct milk deficiencies in both registered and commercial herds.

Obviously, it is not the role of the American Angus Assn. to define the market for each member of the Association. Rather, it is the Association's role to define the genetics that are available within the breed to help members achieve success in whatever market they decide to supply.

National Sire Evaluation identifies the genetics and you evaluate your needs and those of your customers. Then utilize the Sire Evaluation Report as your roadmap to help you reach whatever breeding program destination you select. **AJ**