



# Field Notes

► by **David Gazda & David Mullins**, regional managers, American Angus Association

## Focus on females

*Regional managers David Mullins and David Gazda provide marketing and management advice relevant to selecting females.*

### What trends do you see from commercial producers in their demands for heifers?

**David Mullins:** Without question, *Certified Angus Beef®* (CAB®) and the *AngusSource®* program have steered commercial producers to select replacement females with a high percentage of Angus genetics. In addition, I feel that the American Angus Association staff has done a great job of explaining to commercial producers the growing importance of providing information and performance data to their potential customers. In turn, this has created an increase in demand for replacement females with additional genetic and performance information.

**David Gazda:** To satisfy consumer demand for a safe, consistent and high-quality product, today's packing and feedlot representatives are requesting more documentation from the commercial sector in regard to management and genetics. Likewise, in their attempt to produce a more

marketable value-added product, commercial cattlemen have become more demanding in the specifications of the replacement females they purchase.

Here in the Southeast, more commercial producers are specifying that they would prefer to purchase replacements from single-source, progressive breeding programs with documented genetics, performance records and a stringent herd-health program. Producers seeking these types of replacements realize the substantial investment required to obtain these types of genetics vs. other generic, black-hided females available in today's marketplace. However, from a business standpoint, these cattlemen understand that through the added value that those females possess, they have better positioned their marketing program. Thus, they more quickly recover their investment in quality through premiums received in the resulting replacement and feeder calves produced.

### What is the ideal milk expected progeny difference (EPD), and how do producers determine what's best for them?

**Gazda:** The ideal milk EPD is one that allows calves to grow adequately and reach their genetic potential at weaning, while at the same time allowing cows to flesh, rebreed, lactate and stay sound from an udder-quality standpoint. It will vary from program to program, as it depends upon the environment, cow herd genetics and management levels.

The Association's Optimal Milk Module is extremely valuable, because it allows producers to identify bulls that will complement their cow herd and management practices. The online module accomplishes this by analyzing producers' feed resources and mature cow size. The real value of the module is that it allows producers to plug in numbers that are relevant to their program and receive customized results.

You can access the Optimal Milk Module by visiting [www.angus.org/tools/optmilk/index.html](http://www.angus.org/tools/optmilk/index.html).

### In your opinion, what are the minimum qualifications for selecting a donor animal?

**Gazda:** A potential donor animal must be a proven producer with Angus

Herd Improvement Records (AHIR<sup>SM</sup>) data documenting her production and that of her offspring, both from a performance and an ultrasound perspective.

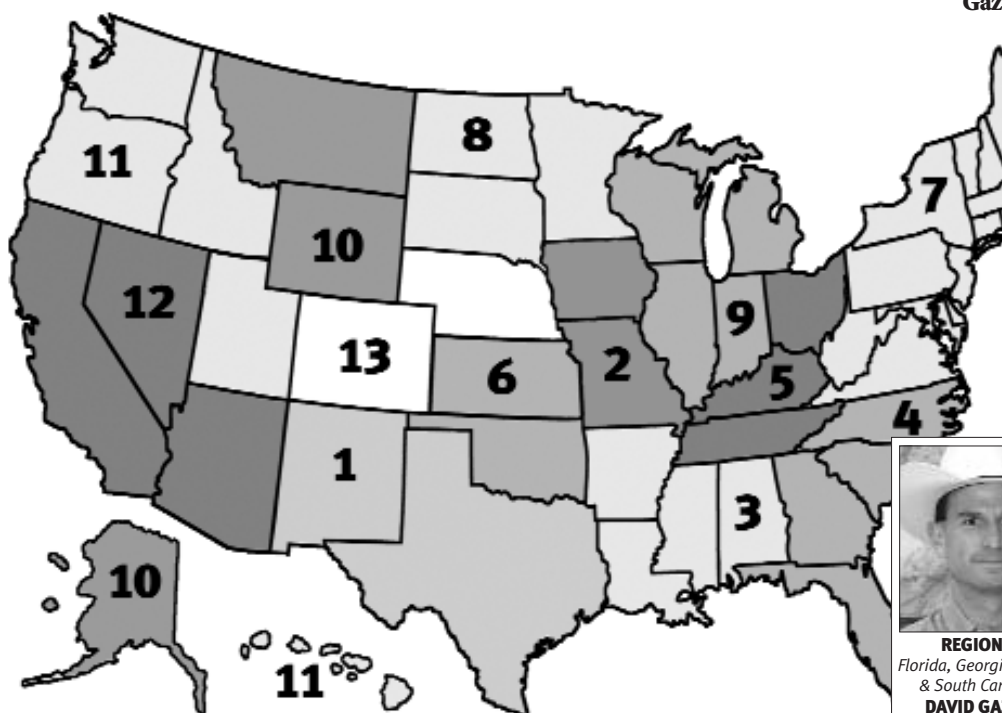


**REGION 7**  
Delaware, Maryland,  
New England States,  
New Jersey, New York,  
Pennsylvania,  
Virginia, West Virginia  
**DAVID MULLINS**

Second, she must be structurally sound in terms of feet and legs, and be acceptable from a composition standpoint (i.e., possess adequate muscle, bone, capacity, etc.). She must also have a sound udder and a good disposition. Finally, from a



**REGION 4**  
Florida, Georgia, North  
& South Carolina  
**DAVID GAZDA**



marketing perspective, she should be phenotypically attractive and possess a marketable pedigree in today's sale arena.

**In herds wanting to use embryo transfer (ET) to expand their genetics, what cautions can you provide in selecting a cooperator herd?**

**Mullins:** In my region, it seems like there is a continuously growing interest in raising ET calves through the use of cooperator herds. Some of the challenges breeders are facing are herd health issues, temperament problems and inadequate nutritional programs within the cooperator herds. I think it is important that the purebred producer provides a detailed contract for the cooperator herd manager that explains what the expectations are in reference to vaccination programs, potential creep-feeding situations, and a clear and concise method of payment. In addition, it is crucial for the provider of the embryos to inspect the recipient females for potential problems such as bad teats, structural unsoundness and inadequate body condition scores (BCSs).

**Gazda:** Given the substantial time, effort and investment involved in conducting an ET program, I recommend seeking an experienced cooperator to work with. Once located, the purebred producer should prepare a formal contract. This contract should clearly define all responsibilities, requirements and expectations of management. In addition, it should specifically state which party is responsible for expenses incurred through the agreed-upon management practices. Finally, the contract should include an agreed-upon, predetermined value for the resulting calves or a clear and concise method of determining that value.

**Are cow energy values (\$EN) marketable in your area?**

**Mullins:** \$EN is one of several very useful selection tools that producers have available to assist in the selection and/or marketing of replacement females. Unfortunately, it appears to me that \$EN has drawn very little attention in my region. I believe that the most likely reason for this is because most of

the breeders in my region have an abundance of feed and pasture resources. Therefore, it seems they have placed less emphasis on selecting females according to their ability to efficiently maintain an appropriate BCS.

**Gazda:** Like any other index value or EPD the Association releases, it tends to take a period of time before breeders become comfortable with the figures so they can effectively apply them to their own programs. \$EN has a great value to commercial cattlemen, especially here in the Southeast where producers operate primarily in a forage-based environment, and supplementation of high-quality feedstuffs can be costly.

Since approximately 65% of production expenditures go toward feedstuffs, it's important for producers to identify sires and lines of cattle that excel in their ability to flesh, lactate, breed and develop in a forage-based environment with minimal supplements. Incorporating the \$EN into their breeding programs has the potential to significantly reduce their production costs.



## REGIONAL MANAGERS

### REGION 1

*New Mexico, Texas*

#### JARED MURNIN

7734 Hwy. 83/84, Abilene, TX 79602  
(816) 390-7092 jmurnin@angus.org

### REGION 2

*Iowa, Missouri*

#### DON LAUGHLIN

36327 Monarch Trail, Guilford, MO 64457-9444  
(660) 652-3500 laughlin@angus.org

### REGION 3

*Alabama, Arkansas  
Louisiana, Mississippi*

#### RICHARD DYAR

1633 CR 104, Crossville, AL 35962  
(256) 659-6305 rdyar@angus.org

### REGION 4

*Florida, Georgia, North & South Carolina*

#### DAVID GAZDA

1985 Morton Rd., Athens, GA 30605  
(706) 227-9098 dgazda@angus.org

### REGION 5

*Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee*

#### CHUCK GROVE

1919 Goshen Rd., Forest, VA 24551  
(434) 525-4687 cgrove@angus.org

### REGION 6

*Kansas, Oklahoma*

#### MATT CALDWELL

14937 KS Hwy. 152  
LaCygne, KS 66040  
(913) 757-2600 mcaldwell@angus.org

### REGION 7

*Delaware, Maryland, New England States  
New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania  
Virginia, West Virginia*

#### DAVID MULLINS

1579 Fairfax Pike  
White Post, VA 22663  
(540) 869-6220 dmullins@angus.org

### REGION 8

*Minnesota, North & South Dakota*

#### VERN FREY

107 Fourth Ave. N.W.  
Towner, ND 58788  
(701) 537-5383 vfrey@angus.org

### REGION 9

*Illinois, Indiana  
Michigan, Wisconsin*

#### JERRY CASSADY

1408 E. Heather Dr., Mahomet, IL 61853  
(217) 586-2009 jcassady@angus.org

### REGION 10

*Alaska, Montana, Wyoming*

#### ANDY REST

6948 Pony Circle  
Shepherd, MT 59079  
(406) 254-7576 arest@angus.org

### REGION 11

*Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon  
Utah, Washington*

#### ROD WESSELMAN

PO Box 74, Moses Lake, WA 98837  
(509) 765-9219 rwesselman@angus.org

### REGION 12

*Arizona, California, Nevada*

#### JOHN DICKINSON

Apt. 524, 4200 E. Commerce Way  
Sacramento, CA 95834  
(916) 285-8621 jdickinson@angus.org

### REGION 13

*Colorado, Nebraska*

#### MATT PRINTZ

9865 85th Rd., Elm Creek, NE 68836-9767  
(308) 856-0070 mprintz@angus.org

