



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

New predictive tools available

When the Spring 2005 Sire Evaluation Report comes out this month, Angus producers will gain access to some new predictive values. Scheduled for release in late December, the Spring 2005 report will contain expected progeny differences (EPDs) for heifer calving ease direct (CED) and heifer calving ease maternal (CEM), a new \$Value providing a weaned calf index (\$W) and an index of cow efficiency — the predicted savings (\$EN) in cow feed energy costs on a basis of dollars saved per year.

Calving ease

While birth weight and calving ease are highly correlated, the correlation is not 1.00, meaning birth weight does not perfectly describe calving ease. The new CED and CEM values will broaden a producer's ability to improve the probability of unassisted births in first-calf heifers.

CED is intended to assist producers in choosing among sires as a predictor of their ability to directly sire calves that need little assistance at birth. Reported in percent unassisted births when mated to first-calf heifers, when comparing sires the value can be used to increase the probability of having unassisted births. For example, if Bull A has a CED EPD of 14% and Bull B has a CED EPD of 1%, Bull A would be expected to have a 13% better record in percent unassisted births when randomly mated to a set of first-calf heifers.

CEM is a predictor of the percentage of unassisted births of a sire's daughters as first-calf heifers.

Sally Northcutt, director of genetic research for the American Angus Association, is quick to point out that CED and CEM are on a probability scale, so if you don't have a problem, you're not going to recognize a difference in actual calving ease.

Weaned calf index

\$W, the new addition to the Association's suite of bioeconomic \$Values, provides a prediction in weaned calf value expressed in dollars per head. Like other dollar values, the index was developed to help factor in both revenue and expenses associated with certain traits to provide a single dollar value that can simplify decision-making for commercial cattlemen.

The \$W index focuses on four economic impact areas. **Birth weight** is used to factor in calf death loss and estimate percent

weaned calf crop. The **weaning weight direct** component is used to weigh in the pounds of calf that can be sold, but also factors in costs due to maintenance needs to support growth of the calf. The **maternal milk** component provides revenue in terms of pounds of calf available to sell and costs due to lactation energy requirements. **Mature cow size** EPDs factor into the expense side of the equation through the cow maintenance requirement differences.

Cow efficiency

As an offshoot of the research done for \$W, another useful tool is being made available to producers — \$EN, or dollar cow energy. \$EN is an independent value to estimate differences in cow energy needs and their associated costs. It will be reported in terms of dollar savings in feed energy per year. The value includes energy needs for lactation, as well as energy requirements for maintenance.

Call for more breeding data

The above values were to be unveiled at the educational forum Nov. 15 during Angus activities at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in Louisville, Ky. The *Angus Journal* will bring you greater detail in the January issue. Information will be available on www.angus.org and distributed through the Angus e-List, for which you can sign up at www.angusjournal.com.

An index to predict reproductive efficiency is in the works, but your help is needed. To establish predictive values in which you as breeders can have confidence, the Association needs you to submit more breeding records.

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