



By the Numbers

► by *Sally Northcutt*, for the American Angus Association

BIF: The beef industry's best kept secret

Behind the scenes lies a sleeping giant — the roots of genetic prediction and the resulting expected progeny differences (EPDs) widely utilized by the industry today. The purpose of the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) is subtle, but ultimately paramount when viewing the impact of genetic selection tools in the seedstock industry.

Benefits of BIF

Catalyst. The BIF serves as an arena to bring members of the cattle industry, scientists and industry affiliates together to address current and future beef cattle topics, particularly in the area of genetic improvement. Simply stated in the introduction of the *BIF Guidelines for Uniform Beef Improvement Programs*, Ninth Edition, 2010, BIF serves “To develop cooperation among all segments of the beef industry in the compilation and utilization of performance records to improve efficiency, profitability and sustainability of beef production.”

Performance resource. The *BIF*



Details about the Beef Improvement Federation can be found at:

<http://beefimprovement.org/>.....guidelines, fact sheets, award winners, links
www.bifconference.com/.....convention coverage proceedings and archived events

Historical background and membership

The Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) was formed Feb. 1, 1968, and is a federation comprised of member organizations including:

- provincial, state and national beef cattle improvement associations and other organizations that sponsor beef cattle improvement;
- breed associations in the United States and Canada that are involved in performance programs;
- representatives from other organizations, such as the National Association of Animal Breeders (NAAB), USDA Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS), National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium (NBCEC), National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA); and
- associate members interested in beef cattle performance.

To learn more about BIF, its purpose, and to access recent convention events, go to <http://beefimprovement.org/> or www.bifconference.com/.

Guidelines manual is a widely referenced document that over time has served to guide breed organizations and international communities on performance recording, analysis, interpretation and implementation. While the manual serves only to be a reference in assisting the beef cattle

community and member organizations with performance topics, this resource is a compilation of recommended standard procedures based on scientific research and industry experience. One example of its impact would be conveyed in sections that describe EPDs and their computational algorithms.

Education and outreach. Each year the BIF holds an annual

convention and tour at a specific U.S. or Canadian location. The annual convention is typically attended by 400-600 individuals representing various facets of the beef industry. This year the meeting is June 18-21 in Lincoln, Neb. The University of Nebraska, Nebraska Cattlemen and U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (USMARC) will co-host.

Recognition. BIF leaders in the commercial and seedstock industry are recognized annually for their commitment, progress and service to beef cattle genetic improvement. Producers learn by example. These industry leaders are showcased at the annual convention and through the BIF website outreach. In addition, service and legacy awards are presented each year to scientists, extension specialists, and advocates or ambassadors of the performance message.

Editor's Note: “By the Numbers” is a column by Association performance programs staff to share insights with Angus members about data collection and interpretation, the National Cattle Evaluation (NCE), genetic selection, and relevant technology and industry issues. If you have questions or would like to suggest a topic for a future column, contact Tonya Amen, director of genetic services, at 816-383-5100.