

R.A. Brown Ranch

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**Summer 2018
Newsletter**

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Image was taken at the RAB in the "Mare Pasture" by Kelli Brown

Philosophy of Genetic Selection

Dr. Eric Mousel shares The
Value Of Good Genetics.

The type of bulls selected to contribute to a genetic program is one of the most important decisions cow-calf operators will make. These decisions will set the direction of the cowherd and the calf crop for many years to come.

However, it may not be a real surprise to learn that the majority of bulls purchased in the U.S. cattle industry are selected primarily based on visual attributes rather than for traits that contribute to long-term profitability at the cow-herd level.

Even with more relevant (sometimes irrelevant) data available on any potential sire from a reputable seed stock program than before; the propensity for many producers to select bulls almost entirely based on visual appraisal hasn't really changed much over the years.

Why is this the case you might ask? It is probably a multi-faceted answer to that question, but the central theme likely revolves around some variation of the supposition that most cow-calf producers do not really

have a guiding philosophy to their genetic program.

They may select specifically for calving ease or something similar; but other than that, they generally are very vague on what exactly they are breeding for. Similarly, cow-calf producers that maybe do have a specific thing they are breeding for, may not have a very good grasp on how to achieve the specific target they are trying to hit, or simply do not have the discipline to repeatedly select for those specific criteria against all of the noise.

As a related tangent, there is an alarming number of cow-calf operators that do have a guiding philosophy to their breeding program, but the philosophy itself may not, in reality, be achieving the results they believe that it does.

As an example, every year I have a significant number of producers call about mid-summer looking for 'anything with a set of nuts' or 'something that will make a live calf.' The underlying philosophy here is a sug-

Genetic Selection

gestion that genetics do not matter to the bottom line and longterm success of a cowherd and thus there is a resistance to invest any capital in replacement breeding stock.

Every time I encounter this philosophy, I can't help but to seriously challenge this thought process, based simply on the fact that in today's calf market, at the average cost of running a cow that has a calf weighing less than 500 lbs, she is a money loser.

That is a sobering statistic as the average weaning weight of calves in Cow Country USA is only slightly over 500 lbs. So, without a sales pitch for fancy bulls or this, or that, or the other; simple mathematics dictates that commercial cow operators with this philosophy do, in fact, need more than a set of testicles and will require more than simply a live calf.

It is important to remember that the genetics of those calves will need to offset not only the percentage of calves that don't make it to a breakeven weight but also to cover the cost of the cows that never produced a calf.

Most cow-calf operators in the USA sell their calves at weaning. However, it is still surprising to me to hear the number of producers that sell their calves at weaning, that place a very high value on selecting for marbling. The genetic potential to marble is a singular trait that the cow-calf producer that sells at weaning DOES NOT get paid for... ever. So why then are there so many cow-calf operators that select for marbling you might ask?

The point is, that when evaluating the end point of a breeding program, the operator needs to look at whether they sell at weaning, background calves, retain replacement heifers, retain calves in the feedyard or finish themselves, or retain through slaughter, etc. The economically relevant traits that should be selected for will largely be determined by this end point.

The next big point of evaluation for most commercial cow-calf operators is thinking about "what do I need a cow to do to keep this program where it needs to be?"

There are many things that will contribute to this question. However, at a minimum, I think we can all agree that these four things will be the base requirements.

Have a live calf - Fertility

Rebreed - Fertility

Wean a calf over 500 pounds - Productivity

Repeat this at least 12 times - Longevity

So the question then becomes, what criteria should be selected for to achieve these four targets? There are probably a multitude of things that will contribute to achieving these tar-

gets, however, I think Tom Lasater of the Beefmaster breed put it best. "A cow outfit need only to select for the six essentials to achieve a focus on long-term profitability in the cow business:"

Disposition • Weight • Hardiness • Fertility • Conformation • Milk

Any number of additional criteria could be named and selected for, but the breeder must keep in mind that the more selection points made for a program, the more disciplined the breeder has to be in finding and evaluating replacement breeding stock.

Another key component of breeding philosophy that I think should at least be considered by any outfit is whether crossbreeding can help achieve the goals set for the program. Besides the wave of exotic breeds that entered the U.S. beef industry in the 1960's and '70's, it probably is no real surprise that the national cow herd is currently mostly straight-bred Angus.

However, it is also no surprise then that cow productivity (weaning weights) has gone up very little since that time when we largely quit crossbreeding beef cattle. The heterosis afforded by crossing two different breeds and thus recovering the accumulated inbreeding depression found in all straight breeds is the only real boost in production the average cow-calf operator is going to get.

The real decision should probably be based on whether the goals of the program are to capture the individual heterosis as a result of that first cross of parents of different breeds or can the full maternal heterosis; where crossbred cows are mated to a third breed, be netted.

Individual heterosis has been shown to provide about an 8% boost in performance. Maternal heterosis, on the other hand, will provide an additional 15% boost in production. Heterosis is accumulative, so when both individual and maternal heterosis are captured in a breeding program, a whopping 23% boost in production can result from a solid crossbreeding strategy.

I am not sure I could find a cow-calf operator in the country that wouldn't take a 23% boost in production with little to no additional investment.

Once upon a time, it was fun to talk about using composite breeds in a crossbreeding program, but the reality was that a solid composite seed stock program was a pretty rare thing.

"The expense of purchasing a good bull is about the same as the cost of running a bad bull..."

But now, almost everyone reading this can probably name at least two or three composite seedstock producers in their region.

The final thing that invariably comes up is 'How much should I spend for bulls?' This is a very open-ended question, and I don't necessarily have a very definitive answer for it. There are a couple of benchmarks I think a commercial outfit can use to evaluate what they should be spending for bulls.

My dad always used to say, "The expense of purchasing a good bull is about the same as the cost of running a bad bull. You can pay for it on the front end or the back end, but you'll pay for it either way."

I like to look at it from a little different angle. Many outfits I have talked to cannot get their minds around how a commercial cow outfit can routinely spend \$6,000 - \$7,000 on bulls.

The following table was built to help illustrate the cost of a seedstock bull on a cost per cow basis. Salvage value is an arbitrary value and can range from operation to operation, yet the math still applies. While the estimated number of cows bred per lifetime was figured by assuming a bull will on average breed for 4 years and cover 25 cows as a yearling and 35 cows the subsequent years, which equates to 130 females.

Price Paid	Salvage	Net Cost	Cows Bred/ Lifetime	Net Cost/ Cow/Yr
\$3000	\$1350	\$1650	130	\$12.69
\$4000	\$1350	\$2650	130	\$20.38
\$5000	\$1350	\$3650	130	\$28.07
\$6000	\$1350	\$4650	130	\$35.76
\$7000	\$1350	\$5650	130	\$43.46
\$8000	\$1350	\$6650	130	\$51.15
\$9000	\$1350	\$7650	130	\$58.84

From the table, you can see that the net cost per cow per year of a bull that brought \$7,000 on a sale is just a shade over \$40/ cow/year. It seems to me that most commercial outfits kind of have that \$30-\$40/cow in mind when they think about genetic value.

On a net cost per cow per year basis, \$7,000 is not much of a stretch for an outfit that wants above average bulls. I'm not suggesting commercial outfits should go out and spend \$7,000 on bulls, I'm just pointing out the likely philosophical thinking behind this phenomena.

When you break purchase price down to a net cost per cow per year, expensive bulls all of a sudden look much more reasonable.

Dr. Eric Mousel, University of Minnesota Beef Team Grand Rapids, MN Experiment Station

Thanks to DLCC Ranch for sharing this in their catalog.

R.A. Brown Ranch



Producer Meetings.

TAMU Beef Cattle Short Course - Aug 6-8
Roscoe TX Area Producers - Sept 4
RAB SimGenetic Field Day, at the ranch - Sept 18
Scurry / Borden Co. TX Area Producers - Sept 25

See you along the trail!



Fun Events.

Texas Ranch Brigade - Guest Speaker - July 18
Texas Ranch Roundup, Wichita Falls - Aug 18-19
Ankony Angus - Guest Speaker - Sept 26
Snaffle Bit Futurity, Ft Worth - Oct 7-20
Saddle & Sirloin Induction, Louisville, KY - Nov 11



Conventions.

Oklahoma Cattleman, OKC - July 20-21
ASA Fall Focus, Bozeman, MT - Aug 25-26
Red Angus Conv, Watertown, SD - Sept 11-15
TSCRA Policy Conference, Lost Pines, TX - Sept 19-21
Angus Conv, Columbus, OH - Nov 3-5



Sales.

(make sure you're on our catalog mailing list)

PICK OF THE HERD, DV Auction - Sept 12
RA Brown Ranch Horse Sale, at the ranch - Oct 9
44th Annual Fall Bull & Female Sale - Oct 10
Inaugural ROOTS OF OUR SUCCESS Female Sale,
Union Bridge, MD - Nov 10
4th Annual Spring Bull Sale, at the ranch - Mar 13

WANTED: YOUR CALVES

Steers, Heifers & Replacements



“We buy Black and Red Angus bulls and our calves generally sell strong and or near the top of the market on sale day. Last fall we did better than that. We sold all our Spring calves, heifers and steers on Superior. When they sold, I thought they did really well and then my Superior rep called and told me that we not only topped that day's sale, but our calves were the highest priced calves in the country for that day. Their genetics work.”

Chris Bright

Fritch, TX

• Interested in more money for your calves? Our mission statement clearly defines our passion of making you more profit on your calf crop and sustainability in the business. Some of that is in what we save you (back to predictable product line) and some of that is what we get for you.

• We aggressively promote competitive bidding on your cattle by leveraging our resources and reputation to get multiple buyers/feeders competing to own your calves. Through the years, we have established relationships with many individuals who are actively searching to feedlots with RAB genetics.

• We list customer's calves on our website and promote them to potential buyers in many ways. Our track record speaks for itself; RAB bull customers' calves have topped their respective weight ranges across all regions (nationwide) twice in the last year. The earlier we know about your calves, the better we are able to bring the players to the table.

• Call or shoot us an email whether you are consigned to a video auction or sale barn, or in the country.

Pick of the Herd Offered

News



Image was taken at the R&B in the "Pivot" by Kelli Brown

Wednesday, September 12th, 7 pm, Watertown, SD at the annual Red Angus convention. Watch and bid on online at DVAuction.com

Breeders will be jumping out of their chairs to place bids at the upcoming Red Angus Foundation, Inc. auction. The auction, slated for 7 p.m. on Sept. 12, offers a wide variety of items to vie for, however, the prize gem of the auction is a "Pick of the Herd" package from R.A. Brown Ranch, Throckmorton, TX.

The buyer will have choice of any heifer calf, bred heifer or mature cow, including many elite nucleus donors. In addition to the animal, the buyer will also receive a support package of delivery, semen and even flushing. Donnell & Kelli have indicated the funds from their generous donation should be allocated half to support the Red Angus Foundation research fund and half for the Saddle & Sirloin Induction of R.A. "Rob" Brown.

Saddle & Sirloin To Honor Rob Brown

R.A. "Rob" Brown, Jr. of Throckmorton, Texas, has been selected as the 2018 inductee into the Saddle and Sirloin Portrait Gallery. He represents the fourth generation of a Brown family legacy ranching in Texas.

Rob built one of the substantial ranches in the country that encompassed a Quarter Horse band, seedstock herds and various cattle breeds, commercial cow-calf herd, stocker operations, cattle feeding, and farming. His livestock have made a significant impact on the world's genetics, and he provided the leadership for one of the most innovative, and coordinated marketing programs in Ranchers Renaissance.



Saddle & Sirloin Induction for Rob Brown

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2018
Louisville, KY

For more information on Rob's lifetime accomplishments in the livestock business, go to www.RABrownRanch.com

With an astounding amount of service, Rob has leadership in many state, regional and national organizations including the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, American Simmental Association, Senepol Cattle Breeders Association, National Beef Cattle Evaluation Consortium, American Quarter Horse Association, Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, Texas Animal Health Commission, Texas Tech University, National Ranching Heritage Center, International Stockmen's Educational Foundation, and Livestock Industry Foundation.

Since 1936, Rob was raised on the purebred and commercial cattle operation. In 1954 he attended Texas Tech University and despite having dyslexia, became the first Brown to graduate from college in 1958. One year earlier he married Peggy Donnell. Rob returned to the ranch as an employee and his entrepreneurial drive began to bring extra income to the ranch.

In the fall of 1975, R.A. Brown Ranch held its first bull sale, which has steadily grown to offer more than 850 bulls each year. By 1989, Rob became convinced that hybrids and composites would be appealing to his customers. In addition to purebred herds, he started breeding what would become SimAngus.

Largely considered the highest honor in the livestock industry, the Saddle and Sirloin Gallery was established in 1903 and recognizes one individual each year for their lifetime of exceptional service to the livestock business, both nationally and internationally. The Saddle & Sirloin Club will honor Rob during a special program and portrait unveiling on Nov.11 in conjunction with the North American International Livestock Exposition at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center in Louisville, KY.

- **MARRIED TO PEGGY DONNELL BROWN SINCE 1957**
- **GRADUATED TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY IN ANIMAL HUSBANDRY 1958**
- **4 CHILDREN, 17 GRANDCHILDREN, 11 GREAT GRANDCHILDREN**
- **ESTABLISHED AN ANNUAL BULL SALE IN 1975**
- **EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MULTIPLE BREEDS (SM, AN, AR, SE, HL)**
- **HELPED START YCC AT NCBA**
- **PRESIDENT OF 3 LIVESTOCK BREEDS: QUARTER HORSE, SIMMENTAL & SENEPOL**
- **DEVELOPMENT OF 4-BREED COMPOSITE, HOTLANDER**
- **HELPED ESTABLISH TEXAS RANCH ROUNDUP, OVER \$3.2 MILLION FOR CHARITY 1981**
- **INDUCTED INTO AQHA HALL OF FAME, AN HONOR ALSO HELD BY HIS FATHER**
- **HELPED START UP RANCHERS RENAISSANCE 1997**
- **AWARDED THE PIONEER BREEDER OF BIF (2007) AND RED ANGUS (2013)**
- **EMBRACED AND PROMOTED THE VALUE OF PLANNED CROSSBREEDING**
- **AWARDED THE AQHA BEST REMUDA & NCBA CATTLE BUSINESS OF THE CENTURY**
- **SUCCESSFULLY HANDED THE REINS OVER TO HIS FOUR CHILDREN 2013**

Funds have been set up at the following foundations: American Quarter Horse Association, American Simmental Association, Ranching Heritage Association or the Red Angus Association of American. After the portrait is paid for, the excess will go towards some of Rob's favorite causes within these organizations. Banquet tickets can be purchased online at <http://ranchingheritage.org/saddle>. THANK YOU to everyone who was a part of shaping Rob's legacy and also wrote letters of support for Rob's nomination.

The Next Geneti

While Feed Efficiency has always driven profit, the tools that allow us to select for improved efficiency have only recently become available.

When the final gavel falls on October 10, 2018, R.A. Brown Ranch will have supplied over 2000 feed efficiency tested bulls to their ranch customers. In the summer of 2015, we invested in the required equipment, software and training to measure the dry matter intake (DMI) of individual animals. Although this data collection capability has been the most expensive information system the ranch has undertaken to date, when we considered its impact on our customers' profitability, we knew they needed this information - both to compete in the marketplace and sustain profitability in the cowherd.

Consider the value of...

Just a 10% improvement in feed conversion (from 6.0 to 5.4 pounds of feed per pound of gain) saves 480 lbs. of finished, dry ration for each 600 lb. steer that is fed to a final weight of 1400 lbs.

- That 480 pound conservation of feed improves profitability by \$42-\$48 per head.
- If each bull produces 100 calves over their lifetime - that's over \$4200 in added post-weaning profitability of his calf crop.
- That savings in feed translates to an additional \$7.20/cwt. in calf value.

If we could make a 1 pound improvement in feed efficiency (from 6.5 to 5.5 pounds

of feed per pound of gain) that would be worth an additional \$5760 per load of 600 lb. calves - **That would make your calves worth an additional \$12 per cwt.**

These are just a couple of examples of why we believe our customers should be interested in improved feed efficiency.

So, how do we turn feed intake data into a selection tool to improve feed efficiency?

When DMI is analyzed in combination with the average daily gain (ADG) data we've been collecting for decades, we are able to identify variation in feed conversion, or the efficiency at which cattle converted the dry matter they consumed into pounds of gain. But now that we had this powerful information - how could we present it so that our customers could use it?

For us the answer was easy...we have always known EPDs are the industry's most powerful genetic selection tool - so beginning in 2016, we began publishing a feed efficiency EPD, which is represented as F:G (Feed:Gain). The lower the value of this EPD the less feed required per pound of gain. The following example compares the expected progeny outcomes when bulls with very different F:G EPDs are bred to the same set of cows: Consider the example below.

The .60 Difference in the F:G EPD of these two bulls is substantial. Bull A's progeny would be expected to consume 6/10ths of a pound less feed for each pound of gain. Over 160 days, they'd consume 480 pounds less feed but gain the same weight as Bull B's progeny. Then multiply that amount of

money saved over the 25 cows those two bulls were exposed to.

But I sell my calves at weaning, why should I worry about the efficiency of their post-weaning feed conversion?

Just as elite marbling genetics have helped many producers of Black and Red Angus calves earn real premiums for their investment in those higher carcass merit bulls, Feed Efficiency will become part of that added value matrix that differentiates feeder cattle value. But perhaps more importantly than that is the impact that improved feed efficiency could have on cow herd profitability. During the 2016 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) conference the positive correlation between efficiency of feedlot and in the cowherd on pasture was explained - indicating ranchers who raise their own replacements will build efficiency into their cow herds through using elite F:G bulls.

What will increased efficiency look like in terms of cow herd profitability?

What would even a 5% increase in stocking rate mean to the profitability of our average bull customer? How many more calves will they wean or revenue will they generate per section of land? Or per cowboy? Or per bull purchased? We believe that selecting feed efficient bulls and then retaining their daughters will be akin to a beef industry golden goose.

Bull	F:G EPD	Progeny Feed Conversion	Feed Consumed to gain 700 lbs. to finish wt.	Relative Feed Cost
Bull A	-.50	5.4 lbs. Feed / lb. of gain	3780 lbs.	\$378
Bull B	.10	6.0 lbs. Feed / lb. of gain	4200 lbs.	\$420

ic Frontier is here.

We plan on holding several producer meetings around the region, additionally, Donnell will be speaking on several beef industry programs during the summer and early fall – and we're sure this topic will be on many of the agendas. However, if you'd like to see for yourself, please come by the ranch, tour our feed efficiency test facility and take a look at the nearly 600 efficiency tested bulls that will be available the second Wednesday of October.



Image was taken at the RAB "Bull Development Center" by Kelli Brown



R.A. Brown Ranch
PO Box 727
Throckmorton, TX 76483



Ranch Horses

\$120,000

**Money earned in the past
year on RAB Ranch Horses**

**Consecutive years of breeding and
registering Quarter Horses 78**

For over 80 years, we've concentrated on raising the kind of horse that ranching in the big country requires.....versatile. They have to be able to navigate the landscape, cut a cow, and be tough enough to last all day. In the past few years, the Brown grandchildren have

begun showing these horses in the arena too. It goes without saying that these Ranching Heritage bred horses will work for either or both places. Stop by and take a gander or check out this year's offering on Tuesday evening before the Annual Bull Sale.



**www.RABrownRanch.com
#940.849.0611**

Image was taken at the RAB "Headquarters Pens" by Kelli Brown