

Same Name – Different Indexes

HerdBuilder & GridMaster may sound the same, but will take on new meaning

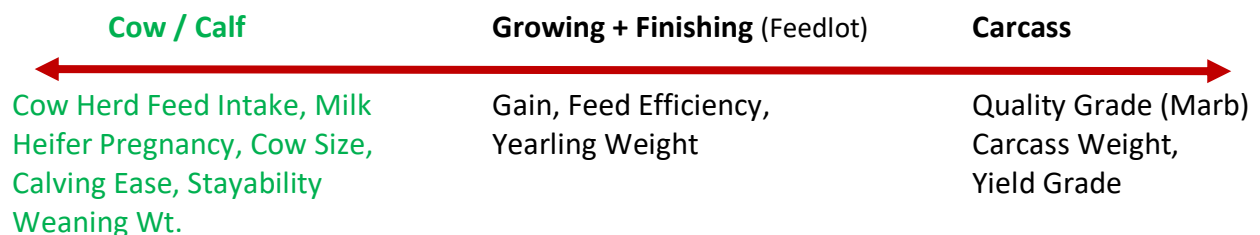
This fall the Red Angus Association of America will be replacing its current economic selection indexes, HerdBuider and GridMaster with three new and improved indexes. At R.A. Brown Ranch, we want to help our customers best understand the new indexes to help with your selection decisions.

However, two of the new indexes will borrow their names, so HerdBuilder and GridMaster will live on, but they will mean something a little different from what producers have come to understand during the first 7 years of Selection Indexes at Red Angus that started in 2013. Herdbuilder was and continues to be focused on cow calf production and has been modified to now focus only on the cow/calf side of the business. Gridmaster has always been a more terminal index and now it has been modified to focus solely on the growing, finishing and carcass side of the business. However, you will need to recalibrate what you consider good better and best for these two indexes because they are on a whole new scale that has more spread from top to bottom. Therefore, use the % Ranks to best identify where you want to be for each index relative to the rest of the animals in the breed.

HB - HerdBuilder:

The original HerdBuilder index was designed to predict differences in profitability across the beef supply chain. Such indexes are sometimes referred to as “life cycle” or “all-purpose” indexes since they cover the cow/calf, growing, finishing and carcass phases. , They were built using performance traits that added revenue and subtracted expense across the entire production system. HerdBuilder also functioned within a prescribed production/marketing plan that assumed all producers used bulls on cows and heifers, raised their own replacements, fed all cull heifers and 100% of the steers and marketed them on a value-based grid. Even though most producers sell calves at weaning, HerdBuilder reasoned that their calves were more valuable if they had superior genetics for the feedlot and carcass phases.

(Original) HerdBuilder is shown below:

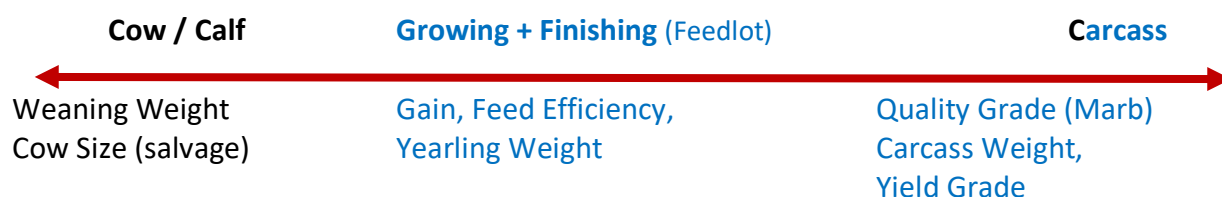


The New HB - HerdBuilder index will differ in that it is more specialized to predict differences in profitability solely in the cow/calf phase. Thus, it is focused on fertility, calving ease, smaller mature size and less cow cost with good weaning weight. However, it will not consider any of the post-weaning traits shown in the feedlot and carcass phases. The portion of the above diagram **printed in Green** shows how the new HerdBuilder index focuses its prediction of profitability solely on the cow/calf producer.

GM - GridMaster

The new Gridmaster changed just a little bit in the traits of importance, but it changed a lot in the spread of the actual index numbers from best to worst.

(Original) GridMaster is shown below:

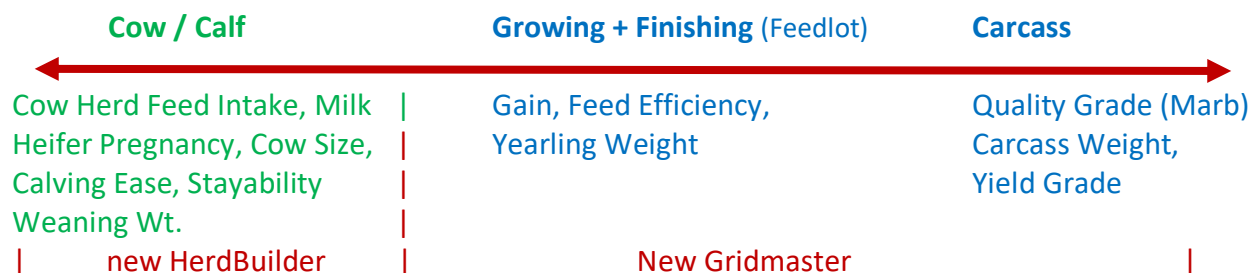


The New GridMaster will take a more segmented look at profitability along the beef supply chain, and only consider those traits that impact the growing, finishing and carcass phases of the industry (see those traits printed in blue in the GridMaster diagram above).

ProS – the new “all-purpose” index

ProS is an abbreviation for Profitability and Sustainability) which simply adds the new HB & new GM together to include all of the traits that impact profitability across the entire beef production system.

ProS (Profitability & Sustainability) = HerdBuilder + GridMaster



One of the advantages in the new system is that producers will be better able to use an index that truly represents their operation’s role in the industry.

Moving forward GridMaster will still work well for those outfits that buy all their replacements and feed their entire calf crop. Operations that raise their own replacements but also retain ownership will find **ProS** to be a good fit. Producers who sell their calves at weaning and raise their own replacements should focus more on **HerdBuilder**. And, if those same cow calf producers want to build the reputation for high value feeder calves there is nothing wrong with selecting for HerdBuilder while keeping minimum standards on GridMaster as well. However, remember that Stayability has a huge impact on the HerdBuilder index and that is an important trait if it is properly calculated. Unfortunately, Angus does not have a Stay EPD, so when we bring in new Angus genetics into our reds, it severely distorts their Stay and even their Heifer Pregnancy, Maintenance Energy and Dry Matter Intake EPDs. This is one of the many reasons why we like to use the breed association indexes as well as \$Profit, \$Ranch and F:G (Feed to Gain (Efficiency)) as additional tools to help you best identify cattle with the traits to improve your profitability and sustainability in the cattle business.