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November 2026

the Register





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MARVEL



WS MARVEL 8M
29SM0544 | ASA 4363941

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- » A data package that will have you walking on air, +199 API, +118 TI, +.93 MARB, +98 WW, +158 YW and manageable top 1/3 birth
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- » DNA tested homozygous black, homozygous polled, PB SM

HOOKS GALILEO 210G x LCDR FAVOR 149F

TRAIT	CE	BW	WW	YW	ADG	MCE	MILK	MWW	STAY	DOC	CW	YG	MARB	BF	REA	SAPI	STI
EPD	+15.3	-2.4	+97.7	+158.0	+.38	+11.7	+32.8	+81.5	+16.4	+18.3	+60.9	-0.32	+.93	-.049	+1.27	+199	+118
ACC	.64	.75	.56	.56	.56	.53	.23	.33	.41	.47	.48	.38	.46	.41	.45	1	1
%	10	10	10	3	3	1	10	2	4	3	1	4	1	1	1	1	1

EPDs as of 9/22/2026 highlighted from a **MATERNAL PERSPECTIVE** **ALL-PURPOSE PERSPECTIVE**

RANCH MAKER



IR RANCH MAKER M787
29SM0550 | ASA 4471765

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- » Homozygous black, homozygous polled (DNA confirmation pending), 1/2 SM, 1/2 AN

G A R FIREPROOF x IR PROVERB H350

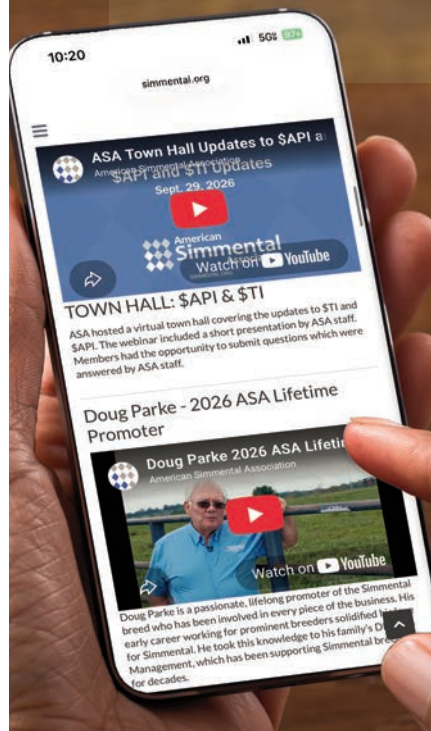
TRAIT	CE	BW	WW	YW	ADG	MCE	MILK	MWW	STAY	DOC	CW	YG	MARB	BF	REA	SAPI	STI
EPD	+19.8	-1.6	+97.8	+157.1	+.37	+9.4	+34.6	+76.0	+19.9	+20.1	+66.5	-.05	+1.15	+.006	+.95	+207	+117
ACC	.49	.52	.50	.50	.50	.42	.19	.28	.32	.43	.42	.35	.43	.39	.41	1	1
%	3	30	10	5	10	15	2	10	10	4	4	1	15	15	1	1	1

EPDs as of 9/22/2026 highlighted from a **MATERNAL PERSPECTIVE** **ALL-PURPOSE PERSPECTIVE**

For a full data set, progeny photos, and more, visit Bull Search at ABSbullsearch.ABSglobal.com or contact your local ABS Representative.



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- ◆ SimGenetics
- ◆ Simple trait selection
- ◆ Genetic improvement tools
- ◆ Frequently asked questions



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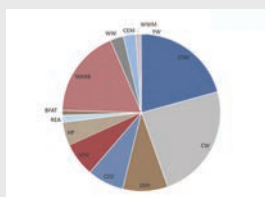
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ASA Spotlight

Staying the Course

by Rose Oie

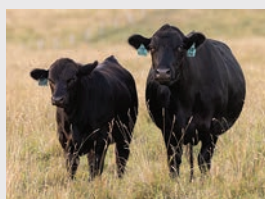
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Two new awards will recognize seedstock and commercial producers who exemplify the practical application of performance-oriented cattle production.

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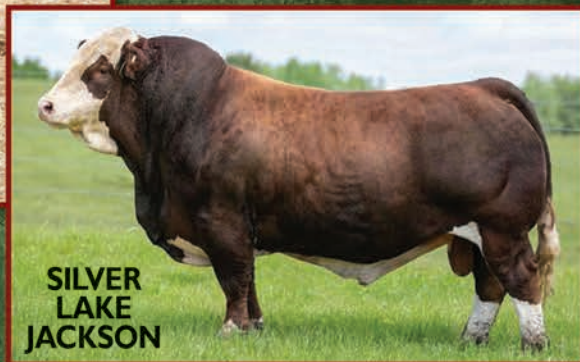
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M160, MAINTAINER AMAA 577511
TJSC END GAME X MINN HARD WHISKEY



M205, PB SM ASA 4429742
SFI CONVICTION X Y1 HIGHLIGHT



L93, PB SM ASA 4243058
LLSF DRAFT PICK X KCC1 PINNACLE



N40, PB SM ASA 4667388
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the Register

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ASA 4522539 11N

3/4 SM 7/32 AN 1/32 AR KBHR CHARGER K102 DAUGHTER
Sells bred to ELECTRIFY.

CE	WW	YW	MILK	STAY	MARB	SAPI	\$TI
14.6	77.0	116.0	21.9	17.8	0.49	150.0	85.4



ASA 4522642 55N

3/4 SM 1/4 AN BRIDLE BIT ECLIPSE E744 DAUGHTER
Sells bred to TRIUMPH.

CE	WW	YW	MILK	STAY	MARB	SAPI	\$TI
13.0	79.6	122.6	24.8	16.4	0.48	145.4	86.5



ASA 4522589 25N

3/4 SM 5/32 AR 3/32 AN GW COPPERHEAD 919G DAUGHTER
Sells bred to ELECTRIFY.

CE	WW	YW	MILK	STAY	MARB	SAPI	\$TI
16.5	83.8	126.6	32.3	16.1	0.47	150.7	90.3



ASA 4203478 42L

3/4 SM 1/4 AN TJ RRR XCEPTIONAL 528G DAUGHTER
Sells bred to LEGIT.

CE	WW	YW	MILK	STAY	MARB	SAPI	\$TI
12.2	86.0	132.4	35.7	17.6	0.98	173.0	101.1



ASA 4029465 JC225K

PB SM KRJ HZN DIRECT IMPACT F805 DAUGHTER
Sells bred to PILOT.

CE	WW	YW	MILK	STAY	MARB	SAPI	\$TI
10.1	101.6	166.3	20.9	19.7	0.65	178.6	107.0



ASA 4203549 24L

5/8 SM 11/32 AN 1/32 CS CLRS HOMELAND 327H DAUGHTER
Sells bred to RANCH MAKER.

CE	WW	YW	MILK	STAY	MARB	SAPI	\$TI
20.3	78.4	123.2	30.0	19.2	0.33	157.5	87.1

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by Dr. Jon DeClerck, ASA EVP

The Responsibility to Improve

There are moments in an association's history when standing still is the easier choice. This is one of them.

The updated \$API and \$TI are going to bring change. Some cattle are going to move, and

animals that looked outstanding under the old indexes may not look quite as shiny under the new ones. Some breeders will be frustrated, and I understand why. Years of selection decisions, pedigrees, marketing, and pride can be tied to those cattle. A re-ranking is not just a number on a screen when you have invested part of your program in that animal.

Before we decide that discomfort means we are headed in the wrong direction, it is worth remembering who we are. The American Simmental Association was not built by people who were afraid to question convention. From the beginning, this Association has been willing to measure cattle, collect records, follow the facts, and use science to build genetics that matter to the commercial beef industry. That willingness to challenge ourselves has been one of the defining characteristics of ASA.

We have not gotten every turn right. There were periods when the breed, like much of the industry, chased extremes. The frame race is one example. But some of the most important moments in our history came when breeders and staff were willing to ask whether the direction of the breed still matched the needs of the cattle business.

For the first time in more than a decade, Dr. Jerry Lipsey joined us at an ASA meeting during Fall Focus. I asked him to speak because Dr. Lipsey is someone I have long admired, particularly for the way he led. He understood that you do not move a breed simply by issuing a directive. You do it through education, conversations, persistence, and sometimes one handshake at a time. He helped steer this breed back toward science, objective information, and cattle built to serve the commercial industry. As he walked us through major turning points in ASA history, a common thread became clear: this Association has made its greatest progress when it has been willing to learn, adapt, and follow where science leads.

That history feels especially relevant today. "Profit Through Science" cannot simply be something printed beneath a logo. It has to describe how we operate when the science challenges what is familiar. There will be times when answers are uncomfortable, rankings change, and leaving things alone would be easier. Those are the moments when that philosophy matters most.

For 21 years, \$API and \$TI have helped move this breed forward. They worked. But the industry has changed, and science has changed with it. Today, we can estimate profitability more precisely.

That means our yardstick needs to improve. When you improve the yardstick, rankings change. A bull did not become genetically different overnight because his percentile moved. What changed is our ability to estimate how his genetics fit the economic realities of the beef business. If a better measuring stick gives us a different answer, our responsibility is not to sand down the marks until we get the old answer back.

Our responsibility is to learn from it. The updated indexes ask us to keep pressure on cow cost and mature size while producing cattle with value beyond the ranch gate. They will require us to consider carcass weight, efficiency, fertility, longevity, and breed complementarity together rather than chase a single trait. There will still be more than one way to create a profitable Simmental animal.

That is a strength, not a weakness. The commercial producer does not owe Simmental their business. We have to earn it. We earn it when our females stay in the herd. We earn it when our calves perform. We earn it when our cattle create value for the next owner, and when the product at the end of the chain hits the mark.

That is the benchmark. We can respect our history without freezing it in place. We can be proud of the cattle that brought us here without insisting yesterday's rankings must remain today's rankings. The people who built this Association used the best information they had to make the breed better.

We owe them more than nostalgia. We owe them the same courage. Our job is not to protect yesterday's rankings. It is to give breeders the best tools we can to build tomorrow's cattle. Change is uncomfortable. Progress usually is.

But this is not a departure from who we are. This is who we are. ■

Vol. VII

The Grand Event

DECEMBER 18, 2026

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B C R TIME TO SHINE N026
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Top 20 Purebred Simmental Heifer
Congratulations Benjamin Byers!



B C R TIME TO SHINE N026
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4th Overall Breeding Heifer
Congratulations Benjamin Byers!



B C R TIME TO SHINE M123
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Purebred Simmental Heifer
Congratulations Bret Pembroke & Circle M Farms!



B C R KANDY N100
2026 AJSA National Classic Res. Champion Division III
Top 20 Purebred Simmental Heifer
Congratulations Cash Lehrman!



B C R TIME TO SHINE 106K
2023 American Royal
Grand Champion Percentage Simmental Heifer
Congratulations Carlee Clark!



B C R SARA N047
2026 WV State Fair Champion
Percentage Simmental Heifer
Congratulations Ella Miller!



B C R SWEET MISS RELENTLESS 227N
2026 OH Cow-Chella
Supreme Champion Breeding Heifer
Congratulations Stokely Coor!



B C R TIME TO SHINE 037N
2026 IA State Fair Reserve Grand
Champion Purebred Simmental Heifer
Congratulations Kennedy Jarr!



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2026 18

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by Chris Ivie, Eastern Region

As I try to gather my thoughts for my last Viewpoint as an ASA Trustee, thoughts are running through my head about how much I have learned over the past six years. One of the biggest reality checks for me was just how much more there is to the American Simmental Association, beyond registering cattle. The ASA is such a

dynamic operation, and until you spend time behind the scenes, you cannot truly appreciate what all goes on day to day. The ASA has something to offer to anyone producing beef today, which includes everything from raising registered seedstock to running commercial cattle.

We have gone through some changes over the last 18 months with Dr. Shafer retiring, and the hiring of his successor, Dr. Jon DeClerck. As expected, it takes a little time for things to fall into place, but the Board of Trustees, staff, partners, and membership have embraced the direction this organization is going. With this momentum, it's almost impossible to stop the locomotive from barreling down the tracks. Since I started serving as a trustee six years ago, we have heard our membership and partners express concerns over our "speed of commerce." The trustees and staff of the ASA have heard you loud and clear! As many — if not all of you — know, the ASA has launched five new EPD over the last year, and have just launched a research release of the updated

\$API and \$TI indexes. All these new tools not only give SimGenetics breeders more firepower, but they also give our partners (and more importantly the commercial breeders) that same added firepower when making breeding and purchasing decisions. It's a win-win for the entire beef industry.

The AJSA National Classic continues to be a premier event each and every year, and 2026 was as good as it gets. Our staff, along with an army of volunteers, put on a first-class event for all ages. My eight-year-old granddaughter, Eleanor, attended her first National Classic this year as a novice, and had an absolute blast. I must also say that this year's theme was great, and in my opinion, the music used in the background was the best ever. The depth of quality in the cattle was remarkable on both days! The Owned division is always competitive, but I want to give a shout-out to the Bred and Owned division, which has become very competitive. My hat goes off to all these amazing young Simmental breeders who are the future of this breed. A big thank you to Mia Bayer, Chance Ujzdowski, and their crew for always knocking it out of the park!

What an honor and privilege it has been to serve the ASA membership over the past six years. It has been humbling to say the least! I believe God put all of us here to be good stewards of what he has given us, and we know he owns the cattle on a thousand hills. I strive each and every day to do just that — be a good steward — and my prayer is that I have been a good steward to this membership during my tenure as a trustee. One of the best

things about serving on the ASA Board of Trustees is the people it has allowed me to meet along the way, many whom I would likely have never gotten to know. I'm thankful for the opportunity to make new lifelong friends.

In closing I want to thank Dr. DeClerck for agreeing to become our EVP. Jon has done a remarkable job and works tirelessly to not just maintain the status quo, but he has demonstrated that he and his staff are looking ahead years down the road to make improvements for the betterment of the ASA membership, as well as the global beef industry. One of the most obvious ways to see Dr. DeClerck's great work is through the recruitment of talented people, adding to the depth of ASA's already talented staff.

I'm a baseball guy, and when I served as Chairman, my slogan for the year was: "You will never steal second base if you keep your foot on first base."

In my opinion, as I look at the progress the ASA is making, I think we have not only stolen second base as an organization, but we have hit a grand slam! John 3:16 ■

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Staying *the* Course

by Rose Oie



Nebraska's Triangle J Ranch is known throughout the country for producing cattle that perform throughout the beef supply chain. The Line family has been building this family business for seven generations, with a steady focus on the future.

Darby Line is the first to tell you he's all about looking ahead while still appreciating all that was built before him. At Triangle J Ranch near Miller, Nebraska, seven generations of the Line family have made their living through the cattle business. The operation began in 1887, when making breeding decisions to retain and grow a herd looked far different than it would today.

Cattle have changed over the years and so has the way the Lines go about progressive ranching. What's stayed constant is the emphasis on producing cattle for the people who buy them.

Darby and his wife, Anette, have five sons, Travis, Dillan, Jason, Creyton, and Braxton. Several sons have returned to the ranch to contribute to the family business and help carry it to the next generation. For Darby, the opportunity to continue the family's legacy and build on more than a century of cattle production is something he does not take lightly.

"My parents, my grandparents, left me a tremendous base and stability," Darby said. "I think that's about all I can leave them [my kids]. It's a start because it's so hard to get started in the cattle business, if you don't have a little bit of help."

Triangle J began with Shorthorn cattle before Darby's grandfather transitioned to Herefords. His father later added Angus genetics and began working with crossbred cattle. Darby's own path into the Simmental breed began while he was still in high school.

He purchased his first Simmental bull and later bought several 4-H projects, bringing Simmental cattle into the operation at a time when the breed looked quite different than it does today.

"We bought some Simmental cattle back when they were more red and white spotted cattle at that time," Darby said.

The Lines soon had an opportunity to acquire some of the early black Simmental genetics available in the breed, including genetics from breeders such as Jim Lehman as those herds dispersed.

From there, the operation continued to develop its own direction. Today, Triangle J works with both pure-bred Simmental and SimAngus genetics, with goals to provide commercial producers with bulls that fit a wide range of production systems.

Darby sees flexibility as one of the breed's greatest strengths. "I think the breed is very diversified, especially now," he said. "We're able to find calving ease genetics, along with low birth weights now, where maybe it was strictly more of a growth-oriented breed earlier in time."

That change has allowed Triangle J to satisfy customers with very different goals. Some are looking for growth and carcass performance. Others need heifer bulls or want to maintain a percentage of Simmental influence in their cow herd. "There's just so many ways that you can use a Simmental bull, whether it's a half-blood or a pure-bred, to satisfy your customer's needs," Darby said.



Cattle have changed over the years and so has the way the Lines go about progressive ranching. What's stayed constant is the emphasis on producing cattle for the people who buy them.

Darby recognizes that there is no single type of commercial cow herd across the region. Even within Nebraska, customers can have dramatically different environments, cow sizes, and management systems. "Everybody needs something just a little bit different," he said.

That means the job of a seedstock producer does not end when a bull leaves the ranch. Darby spends considerable time visiting customers, particularly in the fall after their calves have had an opportunity to develop.

He wants to see what the cattle are doing outside of his own pastures. "I try to spend a month or two at least in the fall visiting customers," Darby said. "I don't make it everywhere, but I sure try to do my best to at least make a phone conversation with those people, or a farm visit when possible."

Darby appreciates feedback. If a customer needs more growth, additional maternal value, or a different type of bull altogether, he wants to hear about it. The information coming back from commercial herds is another piece of the selection process at Triangle J. Artificial insemination and embryo transfer have been part of the program for years, helping Darby to multiply genetics from the females he considers the most valuable.

By combining top donor females with selected AI sires, Triangle J can make more progress in the traits it wants to emphasize. DNA testing has added another advantage to their toolbox. Darby was initially hesitant about genomic technology, but years of using DNA testing have changed his perspective. "As I've seen our herd grow since we started DNA testing and total herd testing, I see the differences," he said.

The value, he explained, is apparent when comparing full siblings and embryo calves. Genetic differences that once may have taken several years to become obvious can now be identified much earlier. "You see those subtle differences among your full sibs and embryo projects, whereas maybe before it would have taken you two, three, four years to see that level of growth," Darby said.

Even with more data available than ever, Darby does not believe the numbers should replace cattle evaluation. For Triangle J, the goal is to use the information together. "We're not out here looking for the extremes," he said. "We're trying to find that balance and to find the cattle that are more in the middle."



Opposite: Nebraska is the second largest beef-producing state in the US, and the Triangle J Ranch program has a major impact on the state's seedstock and commercial producers. Above: Darby Line operates Triangle J Ranch alongside his family. Below: Triangle J Ranch utilizes many technologies, from embryo transfer and AI, to DNA testing, with the goal of multiplying their top-performing genetics.



That mindset carries into addressing environment specifics surrounding the ranch. In central Nebraska, Triangle J sits close enough to feedlots and abundant grain resources to see what cattle can do in a high-energy finishing environment. At the same time, many of the ranch's customers operate in the Nebraska Sandhills, where feed resources can be much more limited.

Darby sees value in having experience with both sides. "We want to make sure that we're raising cattle that can survive in both environments," he said.

For him, functional cattle are especially important when customers are working in tougher environments. Cattle need the ability to maintain when high-energy feed sources are not readily available.

"They have to be really sound and functional," Darby said. "We want to eliminate those hard-doers that are not going to survive in those environments for our customers."

(Continued on page 14)

Staying the Course

(Continued from page 13)

The operation has begun developing TJ Feeders to help commercial customers gain more information about where their cattle go after sale and how those cattle perform through the feeding and harvest process.

Darby views the effort as a way to bridge a gap that can exist between seedstock producers, commercial producers, and the feeding sector. Connecting the dots between genetics and end-product performance gives both Triangle J and its customers information they can use to make better decisions.

Connecting the dots between genetics and end-product performance gives both Triangle J and its customers information they can use to make better decisions.

Triangle J also buys back some customer calves to feed, but Darby said much of the information the operation receives comes directly from commercial customers. Those cattle provide a larger pool of performance and carcass information that can help make future decisions.

For Darby, those numbers are valuable because it brings the breeding program back to its purpose: producing cattle that work in someone else's herd. That same idea carries into the way he approaches the future of Triangle J. If Darby could sit down with himself at 20 years old, there is one lesson he would emphasize: patience.

Looking back, he said he would have been more careful about following short-term trends and more deliberate about evaluating what fit the program. "I think just being able to analyze those things, making quicker decisions, and then following through with those decisions to make sure we stayed on course," he said.

It is advice that seems fitting for an operation seven generations in. The cattle industry will continue to change, and Darby expects Triangle J will change with it. New technologies will bring more information. Customers will have different needs. Markets and production systems will continue to evolve.

The challenge is deciding what belongs in the program and what does not.

For Darby, that means listening, evaluating and continuing to learn. Most importantly, he wants to give the next generation something to work from. "I hope to give them some stability and guidance," Darby said. "A solid starting point, and then it's up to them."

After more than 135 years in the cattle business, the goal is not to have every answer figured out. It is to leave the next generation with enough of a foundation that they can keep asking the right questions. And, perhaps, look back at the mistakes made along the way and learn from them. "Hopefully they can look back and see, 'Hey, this is where dad made a mistake. I'll try not to make that same one,' Darby said. "That's about as good as you could ask for." ■



The Line family produces both Simmental and SimAngus genetics.

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**MAKE IT
A GOOD
ONE.**



Updating \$API *and* \$TI

by Dr. Elizabeth Dressler, ASA Lead Geneticist

Economic selection indexes are a valuable tool for selection and mating decisions. One major benefit is that selection indexes combine several traits into one number that estimates expected progeny profitability for a specific production system.

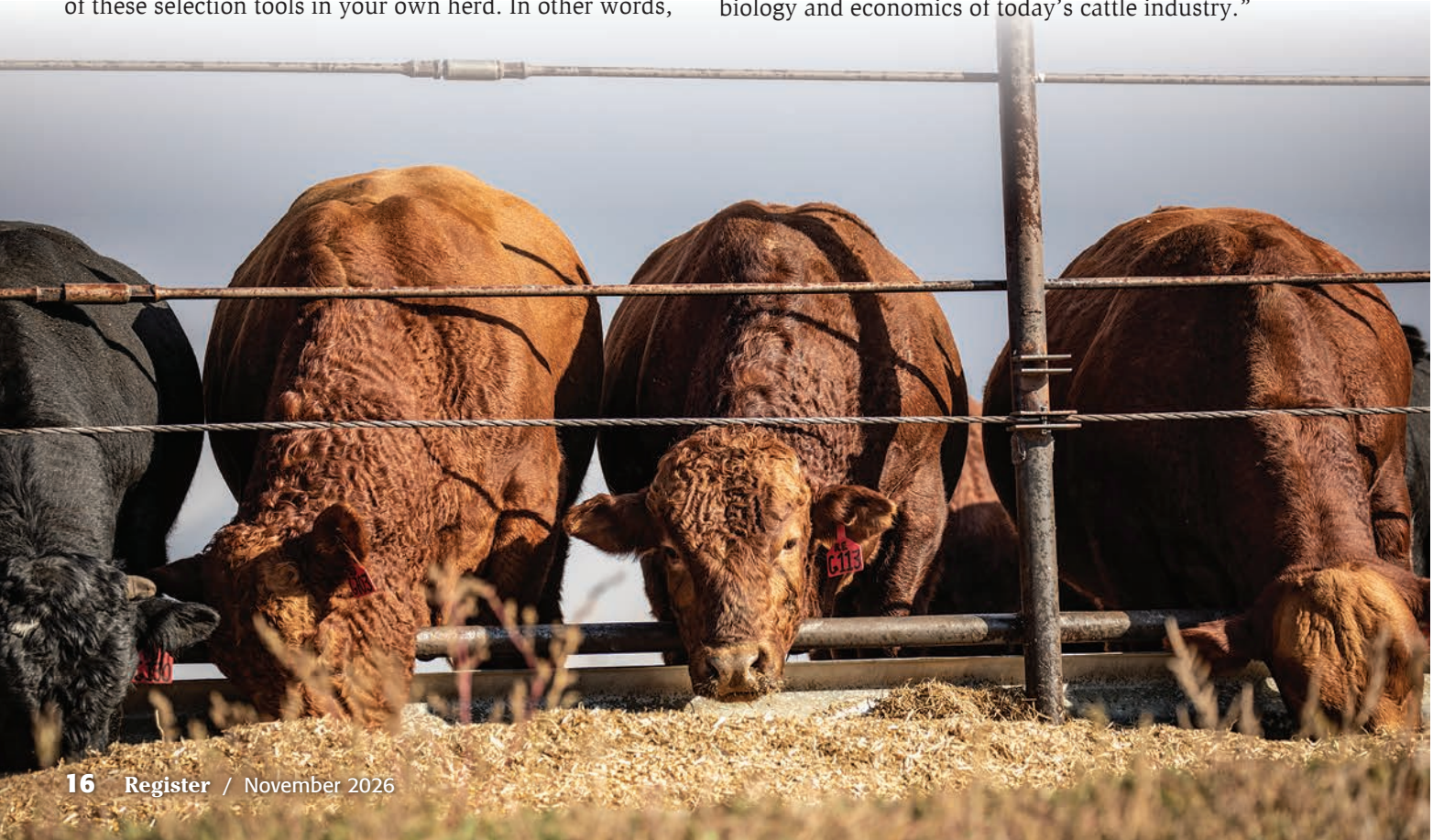
When you open a sale catalog to compare two bulls, economic indexes are designed to help answer a practical question: “Which bull is expected to sire the more profitable set of calves within this production system?” ASA publishes two economic selection indexes: the all-purpose index (\$API) and the terminal index (\$TI). These indexes help Simmental breeders make more informed decisions by bringing the economic importance of several traits together in one easy-to-use tool.

Why is ASA updating \$API and \$TI?

\$API and \$TI are valuable tools for Simmental breeders and have helped make meaningful genetic progress in the breed. If you are a Simmental breeder who has used \$API or \$TI over the years, you have likely seen the value of these selection tools in your own herd. In other words,

the previous indexes were *not wrong*. Simmental breeders have made progress using them, and they have served the breed well. ASA is making key updates so the indexes will be even better selection tools. The beef industry has changed in recent years, and our technology and ability to analyze data have also advanced significantly. Together, these changes give ASA an opportunity to build on what has worked and make the indexes even more accurate at predicting progeny profitability.

Dr. Jon DeClerck covered the reasons for updating \$API and \$TI in more detail in his recent articles, including his article titled “Building on Progress: Why It’s Time to Update \$API and \$TI.” As he explained, “Updating \$API and \$TI is not about moving away from what has worked. It is about building on that success with better data, better technology, and a better ability to model the biology and economics of today’s cattle industry.”



What is being updated?

1. Direct Incorporation of New EPD

It has been a busy and productive time on the IGS science team since I joined just one year ago. In the last year and a half, IGS has released five new predictions for members, including dry matter intake (DMI), \$Gain, mature weight (MW), cow energy requirements (CER), and heifer pregnancy (HP). The release of these five new predictions reflects the hard work of not only the IGS science team, but also the Simmental breeders dedicated to reporting phenotypic data for these traits. It is something ASA members should be excited about and proud of.

With the release of these new EPD came the opportunity to directly include carcass weight (CW), DMI, MW, and HP into the indexes. Previously, this information was approximated based on the relationships between these traits and others like growth.

Think of it like estimating the weight of an animal based on its age and size. An experienced cattleman can often get surprisingly close. But actually putting that animal on a scale gives you a much more accurate measurement. In much the same way, using information from related traits allowed the previous indexes to make fairly good predictions of CW, DMI, MW, and HP. Now, integration of the new EPD into the indexes leads to a more direct, accurate measure of genetic potential for these traits.

2. In-House Simulation

Building an index requires more than knowing the EPD. IGS also has to determine what changes in those traits are worth economically. This is called an economic weighting. Establishing the economic weightings for each EPD is one of the more challenging aspects of developing an economic selection index. We can't simply guess what the economic value of increasing marbling, or any other trait, by one unit would be. Instead, we use what's called a simulation.

Think of this like the popular Farming Simulator video game where players manage and grow their own virtual farms. In a similar way, IGS created a simulation that models a cattle operation. We could think of it like our own "Cattle Ranch Simulator," although no video game controllers were involved. The simulation plays out the index production scenario over a specified period of time and uses the results to generate the economic weightings needed for the index.

The production scenario simulated for \$API begins with a 500-head Angus cow herd where replacements are retained and all non-replacements are sold on a carcass basis. The simulation models a fixed land base. In other words, the "Cattle Ranch Simulator" operates on a fixed

number of acres, which means the number of replacement females retained depends on the resources available from that land. The \$API simulation plays out for 50 years.

The production scenario simulated for \$TI also begins with a 500-head Angus cow herd, but no replacements are retained and all progeny are sold on a carcass basis. The \$TI simulation plays out for two years, focusing on the short-term economic returns of terminal calves.

Another benefit of the updated indexes is that the simulation was developed in-house at IGS. This means economic parameters can be updated with greater frequency than they were previously, allowing the indexes to align with changes in the beef market going forward.



\$API and \$TI are valuable tools for selection and genetic progress.

3. More Precise Accounting of Heterosis

Another improvement to the indexes is the way they account for heterosis. ASA has long been an advocate for crossbreeding, promoting the performance gains from heterosis and breed complementarity. The previous indexes accounted for heterosis in a more general way. Animals were categorized into broad breed groups, and then a heterosis adjustment factor was applied at the end. The updated indexes account for heterosis more precisely within the simulation itself. The simulation described above was repeated multiple times using bulls at different percentages of Simmental (or more specifically non-British or dairy), in 10% increments ranging from 0% Simmental to 100% Simmental. This results in a different set of marginal economic values and relative emphasis of traits (discussed below) for each 10% Simmental group.

(Continued on page 18)

Updating \$API and \$TI

(Continued from page 17)

In other words, the relative emphasis of traits changes depending on the percentage of Simmental genetics being used. This allows the updated indexes to more accurately account for heterosis, breed advantages, and breed complementarity when Simmental bulls are bred to an Angus-based cow herd.

4. Updated Economics

The economics of the cattle industry have evolved, and they will continue to evolve over time. Economic selection indexes are designed to be robust, meaning they are intended to remain useful despite short-term fluctuations in the market. Because \$API and \$TI were being updated in other ways, this was also an opportunity to update the economic assumptions of the index.

Just like the Farming Simulator game has built-in economic assumptions, such as how much players are paid per bushel of corn, the “Cattle Ranch Simulator” also needs the underlying economic assumptions to generate the economic weightings discussed above under update #2. The economic inputs for the index simulation were based on historical CattleFax data and projected into the future using those pricing trends and relationships among inputs. The economic assumptions cover all the major aspects of cattle production from cow and backgrounding assumptions to feedyard economics and carcass premiums and discounts.

As a result of these updates, the amount of influence a trait has in the index, or the relative emphasis, has changed. You may be familiar with the \$API pyramid, which showed the relative emphasis of traits for the previous \$API. The relative emphasis of traits for the updated \$API and \$TI is shown in the pie charts. As described under update #3, the relative emphasis differs based on the incremental 10% Simmental groups; the 0%, 50%, and 100% Simmental groups are shown.

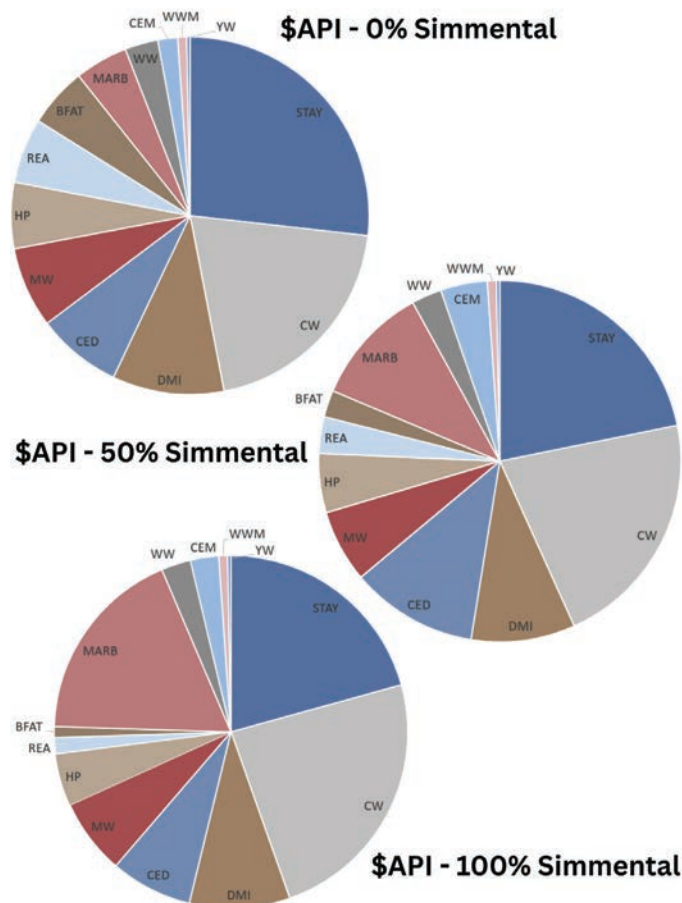


Figure 1. Relative emphasis, or the amount of influence a trait has in the index, pie charts for the All-Purpose Index (\$API). STAY = Stayability; CW = carcass weight; MARB = marbling; DMI = dry matter intake; CED = calving ease direct; MW = mature weight; HP = heifer pregnancy; REA = ribeye area; BFAT = backfat; WWM = weaning weight maternal; and YW = yearling weight.

Key Takeaways

- \$API and \$TI are being updated to provide a more accurate prediction of progeny profitability using improved data, technology, and modeling.
- New EPD are now directly incorporated into the indexes, giving the indexes more accurate information for CW, MW, HP, and DMI.
- Heterosis is accounted for more precisely by modeling different levels of Simmental genetics rather than applying a broad adjustment factor.
- Updated economic assumptions better reflect today's cattle industry, accounting for factors across the cow-calf, backgrounding, feedlot, and packing sectors.
- The updated indexes should be utilized just as the previous indexes were: use \$API when retaining replacements and \$TI when all offspring are marketed as terminal cattle. Use the updated percentile rankings when evaluating animals.

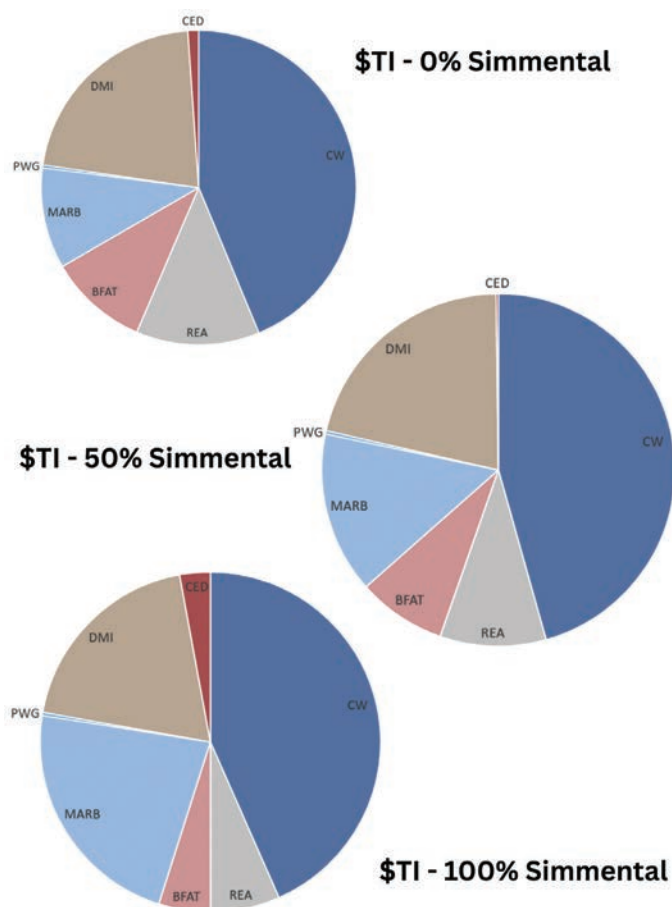


Figure 2. Relative emphasis, or the amount of influence a trait has in the index, pie charts for the Terminal Index (\$TI).

CW = carcass weight; MARB = marbling; DMI = dry matter intake; CED = calving ease direct; REA = ribeye area; BFAT = backfat; and PWG = post weaning gain.

How should I use the updated indexes?

The updated indexes can be used in selection and mating decisions just as the previous indexes were used. The same rule of thumb applies: If you are retaining replacements, use \$API. If you are not retaining replacements, use \$TI.

\$API: Evaluates sires for use on the entire cow herd with a portion of their daughters retained and the remaining heifers and steers put on feed and sold on a grid.

\$TI: Evaluates sires for use on the entire cow herd with all offspring put on feed and sold on a grid.

Both \$API and \$TI are expressed in dollars per cow exposed and represent expected progeny profitability under the production scenario of each index. Indexes should be used as a comparison tool. When comparing two index values, a higher value indicates greater expected progeny profitability and is favorable. Indexes are designed

to help simplify selection across multiple economically important traits. Individual EPD and other selection criteria can be used alongside the indexes to further refine selection based on your breeding objectives.

The table below outlines the average \$API and \$TI for the Simmental breed sub-groups for animals born after January 1, 2024, and provides context for interpreting the updated index values. Because of the updates, comparison of an animal's previous index value and updated index value would not be meaningful. Instead, look at the animal's updated percentile rankings to understand how it compares with other animals in the population.

Simmental Sub-Group	Average \$API	Average \$TI
Purebred	304	179
Hybrid	300	175
Simbrah	259	135
Fullblood	263	146

Table 1. Average \$API and \$TI for animals born after January 1, 2024, by Simmental breed sub-groups.

It's also important to remember that there is not only one recipe for a high \$API or \$TI. There are different paths to profitability. Because an index combines multiple EPD, animals with different EPD profiles can still arrive at a similar \$API or \$TI. This allows producers to use the indexes to identify profitable animals while still having the flexibility to fit their individual operation.

What does this mean for me and my animals?

The updated indexes better reflect the current beef market and the industry we are moving toward. They incorporate current and projected economics, more EPD directly into the index, and more sophisticated modeling. These updates improve the ability of the indexes to predict progeny profitability and provide members with more effective tools for selection.

With these updates, some animals will rank differently. We recognize that change can be difficult, particularly when members have been making selection decisions based on the previous indexes. However, the goal of these updates is not to change the rankings. It is to provide a more accurate prediction of progeny profitability and a better selection tool for the industry moving forward. ■

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*The CMP is a structured young sire progeny test. Participating cooperator herds will random sample their cow herd with CMP semen, and the resulting male (or female) progeny will be harvested with individual carcass data gathered. ASA Staff will work with cooperator herds to provide bulls that fit the general criteria of your management program; however, only bulls nominated into the CMP program may be used. Producers are encouraged to be somewhat proficient in Microsoft Excel for accurate and consistent record-keeping.



Rethinking Female Selection *through an* Economic Lens

by Rose Oie

Shifting the focus from individual cow performance to whole-herd productivity can help producers find the “best” cow for their operation.

Female selection is often discussed through individual traits, but building a profitable cow herd requires looking beyond any one measurement. During Fall Focus 2026 in Bozeman, Montana, Dr. Ryan Rathmann of Texas Tech University and Dr. Troy Rowan of the University of Tennessee gave insight on what cow efficiency really means, and how female selection decisions affect the entire operation.

The conversation brought up a familiar challenge in the beef industry. Market signals on the terminal side continue to reward cattle with added gain and frame size with an end result to produce heavier carcasses. At the same time, those same genetic changes can increase the size and maintenance requirements of the females being retained in the cow herd.

Both professors described this as a “tug of war” between the terminal and maternal sides of the industry. Genetic progress has contributed to heavier cattle and improvements in carcass value, but it has also been accompanied by increases in mature cow size, milk production, and maintenance requirements.

“The problem is that, again, some of this gets kind of gray in the cow herd,” Rathmann said. “Because what we have done is we have unfortunately created a female in our industry that is somewhat built on current extremes.”

For the commercial cow-calf producer, the question becomes whether those additional inputs are generating enough additional revenue to justify them.

Finding the Balance

Rathmann used a series of economic comparisons to show how cow size and milk production can affect the number of cows an operation can support on a fixed land base.

The handout compared mature cow weights ranging from 1,100 to 1,400 pounds, and peak milk production levels of 11, 18, and 25 pounds. The exercise held the amount of forage available constant, allowing the comparison to show how different types of cows would use the same resource.





Above: Dr. Ryan Rathmann discussed the various factors producers must consider when determining the best cow for their operation. Opposite: Finding the balance between cow size and productivity is a challenge for all producers.

Rathmann framed the exercise around a simple question: “What combination makes the commercial producer the most money, utilizing the same amount of grass?”

A larger cow may produce a heavier calf, but she also requires more forage to maintain herself. If the additional pounds of calf do not offset the additional resources required to produce them, increasing cow size could ultimately hurt you more economically in the long run.

Rathmann reminds us that maximizing output is not necessarily the same as maximizing profitability. “It’s not so much about who is maximizing the output value of their cattle. It’s who is minimizing the input of their cattle,” he said.

His simulation showed the effect clearly. Moving from a 1,100-pound cow to a 1,400-pound cow increased annual forage requirements while reducing the number of cows that could be maintained on the same land base. The smaller cows produced lighter calves individually, but the greater number of cows supported on the fixed forage supply resulted in more total pounds of calf produced across the ranch.

Maximizing output is not necessarily the same as maximizing profitability.

The comparison illustrates why looking only at weaning weight per cow can miss part of the economic picture. “Cow efficiency” has to be considered at the herd and ranch level.

More Milk Is Not Automatically More Profitable

Milk production presented a similar question. Rathmann’s analysis compared cows producing 11, 18, or 25 pounds of peak milk. Increasing milk production requires additional nutrients, but the relationship between milk and profitability is not necessarily linear.

His simulation found that the most favorable level depended on whether the additional milk affected pregnancy rates. When a reduction in reproductive performance was included in the model, the intermediate milk level provided the highest gross return per acre. When pregnancy rate was held constant, the higher milk level performed differently.

The larger takeaway was not that one milk level is universally correct. Milk production needs to be considered within the environment where the cow will be expected to work. Rathmann said producers need to be cautious about relying too heavily on any one measurement without considering the trait and environmental limitations of their individual herds.

The same principle applies to other traits. Producers have to determine where their own thresholds are and how individual traits fit into their production system. “That’s your job to figure out, as the breeder, how you balance all of that.” Rathmann said.

Producers have to determine where their own thresholds are and how individual traits fit into their production system.

(Continued on page 24)

Rethinking Female Selection through an Economic Lens

(Continued from page 23)



Dr. Troy Rowan shared about the challenges of measuring individual cow intake, emphasizing the importance of future research.

Efficiency Is More than a Mature Weight

Rowan built on the discussion by looking beyond mature size and maintenance requirements. Fertility, longevity, structural soundness, immune function, the ability to convert forage into a weaned calf, and the ability to remain productive within a specific environment all contribute to the value of a cow.

The challenge is that some of these traits are easier to measure than others. For example, mature weight can be recorded and incorporated into genetic evaluations. Individual cow intake on pasture is much more difficult to measure. Rowan's research focused on why intake may deserve more attention.

Research evaluating individual cow appetite found considerable variation among cows of similar size. In one study, cows of approximately the same weight consumed substantially different amounts of dry matter during a 49-day period. Rowan used the example to show that body weight alone does not tell the whole story of how much forage an individual cow will consume.

Body weight alone does not tell the whole story of how much forage an individual cow will consume.

Rathmann pointed to this as an area where the industry still has work to do. "We have to figure out technologically how to start capturing this information on cows on grass," he said, "so we can start to identify these genetics."

Being able to measure individual intake and identify cows that use forage more efficiently could give producers a better tool for making replacement and mating decisions.

Efficiency Without Sacrifice

Rowan's research also examined differences in body capacity and frame size, finding differences in intake and energetic efficiency among the cattle studied. But the findings did not singly point toward selecting the smallest or shallowest cow.

Instead, the study supported the idea that female selection involves finding a balance between production and maintenance requirements.

Rathmann made a similar point throughout his presentation. The objective is not to eliminate milk, growth or other productive traits. It is to find animals that can combine desirable performance with the ability to function within the resources available to them.

The objective is to find animals that can combine desirable performance with the ability to function within the resources available to them.

"There's an antagonistic relationship between fleshing ability and energetic efficiency," Rathmann explained. "We're trying to reach that compromise. We're trying to find that happy medium in regard to body volume."

With these things in mind, balance will look different from ranch to ranch. A cow working in an environment with abundant, high-quality forage has different nutritional challenges than one expected to travel long distances for limited forage and water. Rathmann pointed to grazing activity itself as another factor affecting a cow's maintenance requirements.

Selection Decisions Have to Fit Each System

For seedstock producers, the discussion adds another layer to the responsibility of selecting and marketing genetics. The bulls and females produced today influence the cows that commercial producers will be managing for years. Rathmann encouraged breeders to keep in mind



Input costs and feed availability are among the many factors that affect female selection.

how traits like mature size and milk production will be expressed in the daughters retained by commercial herds, instead of focusing exclusively on traits that increase terminal performance.

At the same time, neither speaker suggested abandoning growth or carcass traits. Instead, they want you to find a better balance between the traits that generate value at harvest and the traits that determine how efficiently a cow uses resources throughout her productive life.

Think about how genetics can be combined rather than viewing maternal and terminal traits as opposing choices.

Rathmann also encourages breeders to think about how genetics can be combined rather than viewing maternal and terminal traits as opposing choices. “Is it possible to select for genetics that have downward pressure on mature weight while you simultaneously have upward pressure on carcass weight?” he asked. “They’re pretty closely related, but they’re not one to one.”

That opens the door to what Rathmann described as “curve benders”; cattle that can deliver strong growth early in life without continuing to increase in mature size at the same rate.

The end goal is not to make a “small cow.” It is to select a female that can become pregnant, raise a calf, remain productive and make efficient use of the resources available to her.

For producers making replacement decisions, that means asking a bigger question than “Which heifer is the biggest?” or even “Which heifer has the highest genetic value?” The more useful question may be: Which female is most likely to remain productive and profitable in the environment where she will spend her life?

This question brings female selection back to the economics of the entire cow herd. When land, forage, and other inputs are limited, the most productive individual cow is not necessarily the one that generates the greatest return for the ranch. Sometimes, efficiency comes from producing a little less per head while producing more from the resources available to the entire herd. ■

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2. Use whole herd reporting



3. Properly define contemporary groups



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economically relevant traits



5. Use index-based selection

6. Incorporate genomics



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CXP and CMP collect vital carcass data on genotyped calves, which improves carcass trait predictions and DNA marker predictions for all cattle in the IGS genetic evaluation and supports breeders in advancing their genetic programs.

1. Genotype all animals within a contemporary group
2. Genotype males and females
3. Incorporate genomic enhanced predictions into selection decisions as early as possible

Fall Focus 2026:

Reflections on the Past and Future

by Rose Oie

The American Simmental Association's 2026 Fall Focus brought ASA members, staff, and trustees together in Bozeman, Montana, August 28 through September 1. Over the five days, attendees moved through mixed farm tours, a full day of industry education, a recognition dinner with some real breed history in the room, and the ASA Board of Trustees fall board meeting.

Fall Focus opened Friday with tours of Montana State University and the Bozeman Agricultural Research and Teaching (BART) Farm. The BART Farm tour gave attendees a look at the research, teaching, and Extension work taking place on the 474-acre facility, including the Steer-A-Year program, virtual fencing systems, Calan gate facility, and SmartFeed system.

The night continued with a social hour and dinner at ASA headquarters. For many attendees, the evening offered an opportunity to see where the Association's daily activities take place. Saturday's Educational Symposium covered a wide range of topics, but the conversations consistently came back to a question that producers face every breeding season: How can genetic and industry information be used to make better decisions in the herd?

Saturday morning began with a look back. Moderated by former ASA Executive Vice President Dr. Jerry Lipsey, "A Reflection on Defining Moments in Simmental History," brought breed pioneers together to discuss the decisions

and turning points that helped shape Simmental in the United States. The value of the session was not simply in revisiting dates or accomplishments. The people involved were able to explain why certain decisions mattered at the time and how those choices influenced the direction of the breed. It gave attendees a chance to hear parts of Simmental history directly from people who helped shape it.

From there, the symposium took off with insights from guest speakers. Dr. Dale Woerner of Texas Tech University opened the first technical session with "Red Meat Yield: A New Era," addressing the continued importance of understanding carcass value and yield grade. Dr. Andrew Griffith, a livestock economist at the University of Tennessee, followed with a discussion of beef demand, consumers, and the economic outlook facing the industry. The two joined Dr. Jon DeClerck, ASA EVP, for a roundtable discussion before lunch, giving attendees an opportunity to continue the conversation beyond the presentations.

Fall Focus 2026 was held in Bozeman, Montana. Opposite: The Montana Simmental Association hosted a dinner at the ASA Headquarters.



After lunch, attention turned to International Genetic Solutions (IGS) and the tools available to ASA members. Dr. Ryan Boldt discussed updates to the IGS Multi-breed Genetic Evaluation and new trait development, while Dr. Elizabeth Dressler focused on practical application for ASA members. Dr. Jackie Atkins joined Boldt and Dressler for a panel discussion that allowed the technical information to move into questions about how breeders can successfully use it in their own programs.

Dr. Ryan Rathmann focused on female selection and what cow efficiency looks like from the commercial producer's perspective, using mature cow size, forage resources, and milk production to show how breeding decisions can affect profitability. Dr. Troy Rowan followed with "More Than Just a Weight: The Complex Challenge of Breeding More Efficient Cows," covering closely related questions about cow size, body capacity, and efficiency. Both presentations challenged breeders to consider how the cow fits her environment and how genetics can help producers make the most of the resources they have.

For longtime Fall Focus attendee Bruce Holmquist, that kind of information is exactly why producers continue to make the trip. Holmquist has attended the event for years, dating back to a gathering in Kansas City in 2002, before it carried the Fall Focus name. He said attending provides an opportunity to see the amount of information available to seedstock producers and breeders, information that not every producer takes advantage of.

"The people that take advantage of it are in the top 5% for awareness, education, and knowledge about genetic improvement for the industry," Holmquist said. "That's something that differentiates the people who attend this from the rest of the crowd."

Holmquist also touched on the importance of keeping the commercial producer at the forefront of breed improvement. "I think it goes back quite a few years, and I hope it

continues, but it's the understanding that the customer of the American Simmental Association and all breed associations is the commercial producer," he said. "It's the commercial beef producers that put meat on the plate. We need to do it more efficiently and create more profitability in that area."

That perspective connected several of Saturday's presentations. Saturday evening shifted the focus from education to recognition as attendees gathered for the recognition dinner. John B. Collier of Stephenville, Texas, and Gibbs Farms of Ranburne, Alabama, were recognized with World Simmental-Fleckvieh Federation Golden Book Awards.

Collier played an important role in the early development of Simmental in the United States. Gibbs Farms has spent decades developing Simmental and SimAngus cattle while collecting data from its herd to support genetic improvement.

The evening also recognized Doug Parke of Paris, Kentucky, and Jim Butcher of Lewistown, Montana, with Lifetime Promoter Awards. Both have contributed to the breed through breeding goals, leadership, and promotion. Butcher's family has an especially long connection to Simmental, having bred Hereford cows to Parisien, the first Simmental bull in North America, in 1968.

With the educational and recognition portions of Fall Focus complete, Sunday morning brought attendees into the Association's board meetings. The Town Hall opened the day, followed by committee meetings covering Activities and Events, Breed Improvement, Growth and Development, and Policy and Procedures. The meetings provided an opportunity for members to hear updates, ask questions, and participate in discussions with trustees and staff.

(Continued on page 30)



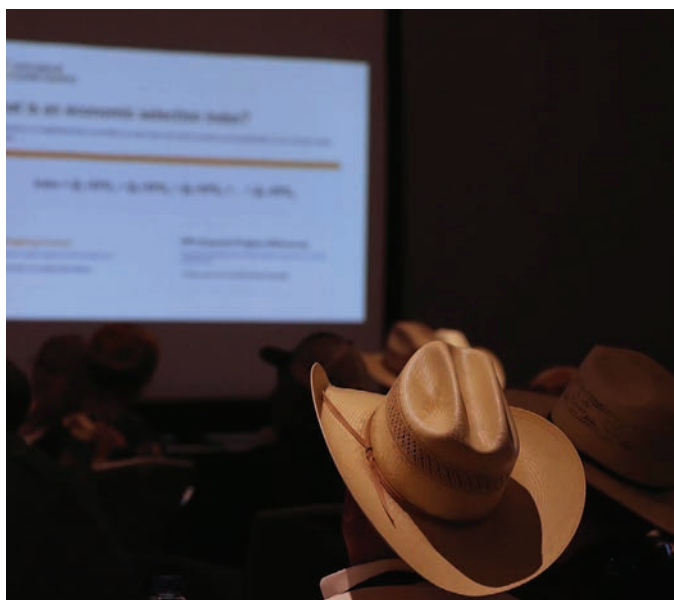
Fall Focus 2026: Reflections on the Past and Future

(Continued from page 29)



Above: Dr. Jon DeClerck addressed the crowd gathered for the Saturday Educational Symposium.

Below, clockwise from L: A highlight of the event was past ASA EVP Dr. Jerry Lipsey's history panel. Producers and industry professionals gathered on Saturday for a day of industry education. The Cash Cow fundraiser raised funds for Fall Focus 2027.



The ASA Board of Trustees then met Sunday afternoon and continued through Monday and Tuesday morning. Committee reports, financial and Association reports, directives, and resolutions were addressed, followed by voting on Association business before the meeting adjourned Tuesday morning.

The open board meeting gave members the opportunity to ask questions, interact with the ASA Board of Trustees and staff, and voice questions and ideas. A week full of history, food for thought, and new breed improvement make the trip well worth it, putting producers in a room where they can ask questions and talk through what it means for their own operations.

As the 2026 Fall Focus came to a close, attendees left Bozeman with new information to consider and conversations to continue for a better understanding of the work taking place across the Association and the beef industry. ■





Above: Attendees gathered to recognize the WSFF Golden Book and ASA Lifetime Promoter recipients. Below: ASA hosted an open Town Hall, allowing members to voice their questions, ideas, and thoughts to the ASA Board of Trustees and staff.



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PACKAGE 3



2027 Spring Total Herd Enrollment

The American Simmental Association encourages all members to participate in our whole-herd reporting system, called Total Herd Enrollment (THE).

HOW TO UPDATE YOUR INVENTORY

Start with your Preliminary Inventory by accessing it online

See [Enrollment Template](#) below (see reverse for instructions or use paper packet received in mail/email)

- 1 **Confirm that ALL spring-calving cows are listed on the form.** This should include any cow enrolled in the previous year, first-time heifers, purchased cows, and cows in associated junior accounts that run with your herd.
- 2 **Enroll or Remove each dam.** Enter an enrollment or removal code in the Primary Code column.
- 3 **A/B/C/D/N** — Enter an enrollment option: A, B, C, or D for each cow. If a cow is being removed, enter “N.”

Enrollment Template

AnmReg Nbr	AnmTatt	Primary Code	AddtnlCode	A/B/C/D/N	Season	Animal Name	BirthDt	BrdCds	EnrYear	BillCode	Remarks
1		2		3							

Do you still own the dam?

THE Enrollment Codes	
0	Cow Bred to Calve During the Season
1	Heifer Bred to Calve During the Season
2	Not Exposed – Moved to Next Season
3	Exposed and Failed to Conceive – Moved to Next Season
4	Exposed and Failed to Conceive – Moved to Next Year
5	Donor Cow
6	Recipient Cow
44	Not Exposed – Moved to Next Year

Optional Columns

- Additional Code (secondary reason for removal) only to be used if the first removal code is already in the primary code column.
- Remarks are for member use only. Enrollment will not be adjusted from this column.
- If you enter “H” in the Bill Code column, you will be billed half now and half later in the year.
- If you need to add a commercial dam, enter her tattoo (AnmTatt), date of birth (BirthDt), and breed codes (BrdCds).

Has the dam been sold, culled or died?

THE Removal Codes	
60	Exposed and Failed to Conceive
61	Aborted
62	Age
63	Appearance
64	Calf Loss at Calving
65	Calf Loss Post-Calving
66	Color
67	Died – Calving
68	Died – Other
69	Died – Sickness/Disease
70	Disposition
71	Herd Reduction
72	Hoof Condition
73	Horned
74	Injury
75	Production/Performance
76	Prolapse
77	Sickness/Disease
78	Sold, Breeding Purposes, Paper Not Transferred
79	Sold, Breeding Purposes, Paper Transferred
80	Structural Soundness
81	Udder Quality
82	Genetic Defect Status

Send Your 2027 Spring Inventory to ASA by December 15, 2026

- **Online:** using Data Entry section of Herdbook Services:
www.simmental.org
- **Email:** THE@simmgene.com
- **Mail:** One Genetics Way, Bozeman, MT 59718

Total Herd Enrollment Payment Options

Enrollment Fees: Registration Fees:	Option A (TR) Total Registration \$15.00 \$0.00	Option B (SR) Selective Registration \$0.00 \$30/\$40/\$50 ^a	Option C (LR) Limited Registration \$7.50 \$30/\$40/\$50 ^a	Option D (CM) Commercial \$390/herd \$42/\$52/\$62 ^a
Choosing the best options:		^a Depending on age of calf	^a Depending on age of calf	^a Depending on age of calf
If you register > 45% of your calf crop.	✓			
If you register < 45% of your calf crop and don't use EPD for selection decisions.		✓		
If you register < 20% and use EPD for selection decisions.			✓	
If you have a commercial herd.				✓
Benefits of enrolling:				
EPD to make informative selective decisions.	✓	Reg. Animals Only	✓	Females Only
Herd participates in genetic evaluation.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reproductive record on every cow enrolled.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Commercial cows or cows of other breeds are eligible.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Requirements when enrolled:				
Every registered SM/SI dam must be enrolled.	✓	✓	✓	
Each dam enrolled must have calf or productivity reported/year.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deadlines to be met for enrollment and calf data.	✓	✓	✓	✓



Instructions for Online Enrollment

www.simmental.org



1. Go to www.simmental.org and select **Herdbook**
2. **Log In** by entering
 - 6-digit member number
(zero filled example: 000317)
 - Password
3. Under **Data Entry** select **Online**
4. Select the **Inventory** tab
 - Click **Spring**
 - Make sure year shows **2027**
5. Select **Update Cow Inventory Online**
-OR-
Select file type, then **Download** to load your preliminary inventory into an Excel spreadsheet
6. See front for Inventory instructions and codes for both methods of entry
7. To upload completed Excel spreadsheet:
 - Save file to desktop and log in to Herdbook.
 - Under **Data Entry** select **Upload**
 - Enter a **Job Title** such as "(Year/Season) THE Upload"
 - Under **Type** select **Animal Enrollment**
 - Click **Browse** – attach saved THE file
 - Click **Upload File**
8. Review **Errors** and/or **Warnings**
 - **Errors**
(indicated by red triangle at left side of line)
 - Select the **Errors** tab – errors will be listed and **MUST** be resolved before submitting
 - Herds in Option D must email job number to THE@simmgene.com for final processing
 - **Warnings**
(indicated by a purple triangle at left side of line)
 - Select the **Warnings** tab – review each warning listed, correct if needed
 - Job may be submitted without resolving all warnings
9. Select **Submit Data**
 - If **Edit Job** button shows, select button, resolve the error(s) and submit again
 - Select **Proceed to Billing** for billing summary
(After December 15, 2026, all options will have a balance due reflecting the \$1.00 non-refundable late fee per animal)
 - Select **Add Payment**. Enter credit card information. Select **Confirm**
 - Select **FINAL SUBMIT**
(Enrollment will not be completed without this step)
 - The **Invoice Status** will change to **Complete**.
Print and store for your records
10. To save job and return later, click **Save and Exit**. The job will remain in an incomplete status under your account.
Please note that billing is based on the submission date, not the date it was started. Job must be submitted by December 15, 2026, to avoid late fees.

**Job must be submitted by
December 15, 2026, to avoid late fees.**



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Nominations Open *for* ASA Producer *of the* Year Awards

by ASA Staff

The American Simmental Association (ASA) is introducing two new annual awards designed to recognize producers who exemplify the practical application of performance-oriented cattle production: the ASA Seedstock Producer of the Year and the ASA Commercial Producer of the Year. These awards will complement the Golden Book and Lifetime Promoter awards that will continue to recognize breeders for their lifetime commitment to the betterment of the breed and the greater beef industry.

These new awards are designed to shine a light on Simmental breeders and commercial cattle producers who are using objective information, genetic selection, and sound management decisions to create value in their own operations and throughout the beef industry.

Seedstock Producer of the Year

The ASA Seedstock Producer of the Year will recognize an ASA Performance Advocate whose operation demonstrates excellence in genetic selection, performance evaluation, breeding decisions, record-keeping, marketing, and continued improvement. Consideration will also be given to how producers incorporate tools and data from ASA and International Genetic Solutions into their genetic and management decisions.

Commercial Producer of the Year

The ASA Commercial Producer of the Year will recognize a commercial cattle producer utilizing Simmental genetics who demonstrates excellence in cattle production, genetic selection, management, efficiency, and profitability. The award will also recognize producers who use performance information to make informed decisions and effectively integrate Simmental genetics into a productive and profitable commercial beef operation.

Nominate a Producer

The first ASA Seedstock and Commercial Producers of the Year will be selected in 2027. Nominations for the inaugural awards are due to ASA by December 18, 2026. The ASA award winners will also serve as the Association's preferred nominees for the national Beef Improvement Federation Producer of the Year awards, creating a direct connection between ASA's producer recognition efforts and one of the beef industry's premier producer recognition programs. Additionally, the selected recipients will be recognized at the 2027 Fall Focus Banquet in Sioux Falls, SD.

The future of the beef industry will be built by producers who are willing to measure, learn, and improve. The team at the American Simmental Association looks forward to recognizing those producers who are putting performance to work.

If you know an ASA member or commercial cattle producer who is putting performance principles into practice, making data-driven decisions, and continually looking for ways to improve their operation, we encourage you to consider nominating them for one of these new awards. To learn more about these awards and to find nomination details, please visit simmental.org. ■



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| 1998 Triple C Farms | 2016 Shoal Creek Land & Cattle |
| 1999 Breinig Simmentals | 2017 Long's Simmentals |
| 2000 Nichols Farm, Wesner Livestock Ent. | 2018 Circle M Farms |
| 2001 Sue Ann Fletcher Nichols Cattle Co. | 2019 Rocking P Livestock & Bob MacGregor |
| 2002 Leighbert Farms | 2020 RS&T Simmental LLC/Jordan Cowger |
| 2003 Double S Simmentals | 2021 Red River Farms |
| 2004 Hudson Pines Farm | 2022 Buck Creek Ranch |
| 2005 Buzzard Hollow Ranch | 2023 Clear Water Simmentals |
| 2006 JDJ Ranch | 2024 Hart Simmentals |
| 2007 Gateway Simmental | 2025 Dickson Farms |
| 2008 Triple C Farms | 2026 Trennepohl Farms |
| 2009 Hart Farms | 2027 Top Hat Simmentals |
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by Brennir Peterson

With fair season wrapped up and school well on its way, it's important to pause and remember what truly keeps our industry strong: faith, family, and education.

At the heart of agriculture lies a deep connection to God, reminding us that stewardship of the land and care for livestock are blessings and responsibilities. Every sunrise over a pasture is a reminder of the Creator's design that hard work, compassion, and perseverance are part of a greater purpose. My faith keeps me grounded when challenges arise and it's a reminder that our work feeds not just ourselves, but communities.

Another vital strength of the beef industry is agricultural education. As fewer people grow up on farms, the connection between consumers and producers continues to fade. Many Americans have never seen where their food comes from, yet they make choices every day that impact the agricultural community. That's why education matters: it builds understanding, appreciation, and trust. Through classroom lessons, youth programs, and hands-on experiences, we can share the story of the beef industry in a way that inspires curiosity and respect. Amy Kirkland states, "What they want to hear from us is how we care for our animals,

and how we steward the land and how we produce this high-quality protein. They want that connection." When we teach people about the dedication behind raising livestock, they begin to see agriculture not as just a concept, but a part of their daily lives.

Agricultural education doesn't stop at the gate or the show ring; it continues through conversations, mentorship, and community outreach. Every teacher, producer, student, and advocate plays a role in bridging the gap between rural and urban perspectives. By teaching others about animal welfare, sustainability, and the value of hard work, we ensure that the next generation understands the importance of agriculture in feeding the world. Knowledge builds trust, and trust sustains our way of life.

Finally, we must never forget the power of family and our connections within the industry. From multi-generation ranches to young showmen learning the ropes, agriculture thrives on relationships. It's the neighbor who helps bale hay before a storm, the mentor who teaches a student to judge cattle, and the families who gather around the show ring each summer. These bonds form the backbone of rural America and ensure that the next generation carries forward the values that built it.

As we move into another season, let's continue to honor our faith, invest in education, and strengthen the ties that make the beef industry not just an occupation but a lifestyle. ■



www.juniorsimmental.org



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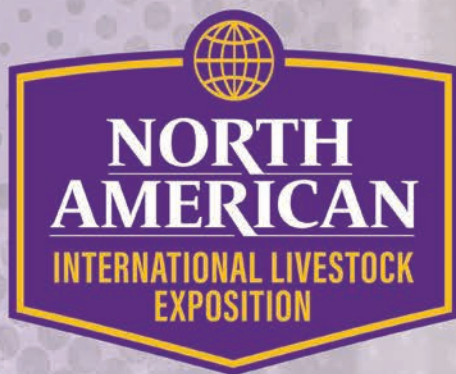
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gracethorson7@gmail.com

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Friday, November 13

- 9 am **JUNIOR SHOW CHECK-IN**
W1 Doorway | Proof of Registration and Cattle
- 2 pm **SALE CATTLE ON DISPLAY**
West Hall

Saturday, November 14

- 8 am **JUNIOR PUREBRED SIMMENTAL SHOW**
Broadbent Arena
Judge: Dustin Frank, NE
- TBA **EASTERN REGION FOUNDATION FUNDRAISER**
West Hall W7 | 30 minutes after show
- 2 pm **SALE CATTLE ON DISPLAY**
West Hall
- 4 pm **SOCIAL HOUR**
The Hitching Post
Hosted by Kentucky Simmental Assc.
- 4 pm **THE SELECT SIMMENTAL SALE**
The Hitching Post | Broadcast by CCI.live
Managed by Haefner Marketing Services

Sunday, November 15

- TBA **JUNIOR PERCENTAGE SIMMENTAL SHOW**
Freedom Hall | Following Angus
Judge: Dustin Frank, NE
- TBA **JUNIOR FULLBLOOD SIMMENTAL SHOW**
Broadbent Arena | Following Limousin
Judge: TBA

Monday, November 16

- 10 am **OPEN SHOW CHECK IN**
ASA Booth | Proof of Registration Only

Tuesday, November 17

- All Day **PTP HERDSMAN OF THE YEAR VOTING**
Ballots available online to all NAILE Simmental exhibitors. Voting closes at 5 pm.

Wednesday, November 18

- 8 am **NATIONAL SIMGENETICS PTP SHOW**
Freedom Hall
Judges: Brigham and Gregg Stewart, KS

2026 SIMGENETICS SCHEDULE



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 **SimGenetics**
PROFIT THROUGH SCIENCE
American Simmental Association





by Dr. Jackie Atkins, director of Science and IGS Operations

Life Does Life Things

“Then, life does life things”

I heard this phrase recently from a woman sharing about some challenging times in her life. It immediately struck a chord. I knew instantly what she meant. Loss, illness, injury, career shifts, unexpected setbacks — things entirely out of our control —

disrupt our perfectly laid plans when life “does life things.”

It’s not enough to say that life *can* be hard; life *will* be hard. There is no recipe for a life without pain, failure, or challenges. The key to navigating these moments isn’t avoiding hardship, but equipping ourselves to meet challenges with self-respect and intentionality. Waiting for the “perfect time”—whether that’s a career milestone, financial goal, or life event—to feel fulfilled creates an endless cycle of striving and the reality that a perfectly easy and comfortable life without challenges will never occur. Cultivating a mindset that chooses appreciation and joy, even amid uncertainty, enables a sense of living a good life at this moment despite the hardships.

Building resilience starts with self-awareness. When discomfort strikes, our bodies usually send an early warning signal: a pit in the stomach, sweaty palms, a tight neck, or a sudden headache. Recognizing physical cues allows us to pause before reacting impulsively to the challenge out of fear or frustration. Taking a pause gives us space to choose a constructive path forward—whether that means taking a walk, reflecting on our emotions, waiting 24 hours before sending a message, or consulting a trusted mentor.

Recently, my daughter received her driver’s permit. Man, do I wish I could put her car in a bubble of protection and safety and never have her face a scary driving challenge. Recently she was navigating a tight, curvy mountain road and took a corner a bit too fast. Another car came from the opposite direction, making for an uncomfortable close call. Though everyone was safe, my daughter was visibly shaken, initially viewing the experience as proof that she shouldn’t drive. But it offered an invaluable lesson: we encountered a challenge in a manageable environment, learned from it, and gained the confidence to navigate similar situations better next time.

Our resilience “muscle” is built from frequently doing challenging things and knowing we can manage in those situations. It’s best to build this resilience muscle in navigable situations as often as possible so when life really throws a doozy, we are ready with a well-formed sense of resilience and knowledge that we can do hard things.

I am happy my daughter had that close encounter. She swerved into the other lane on dry roads at a slow speed in a safe car with people in the car who could help support her. What a great way to learn how fast to take a tight mountain corner. Instead of using this discomfort as a reason to stop learning — I think it exemplifies how to manage the discomfort and learn with some safety. How to recover when you mess up. How not to overreact. How to give your own self grace to learn. How to build resilience.

We all face moments that challenge our comfort zones. When things go wrong, natural instincts might urge us to respond in a less than healthy way: to withdraw, avoid conflict, stay silent to preserve short-term peace, or find your favorite numbing agent. I suffer from this instinct. The trick is to catch yourself in those moments — not so that you will never have them, but to notice as soon as possible when they do happen. Recognize the misstep, and course-correct by asking yourself what’s the self-honoring response, not the self-protecting response.

Often, the best path forward is something we subconsciously know, but loud internal doubts—fear of judgment, need for control, or past anxieties—can make it hard to “hear.” When we are aware of these self-protecting and self-limiting thoughts, as exactly what they are — hurdles of our own making — we can quiet the unhelpful and fear-based reaction. Then with thoughtful responses, move forward with the self-honoring next right thing. And at any moment when we realize we didn’t handle a situation well, we can always realign our actions with our core values, course-correct, make things right, and take the next right step.

The next time life does life things, pause. Ground yourself in your strengths, values, and integrity. Set aside external demands for perfection, control, or validation and trust yourself. Believe in your ability to navigate the next right thing — to find the self-honoring way to thrive in this messy, uncertain, one chance we have at living.

I hope you take a moment to pause after reading this to ask and answer the following: What hardship are you facing? What is the self-honoring next right thing to do? ■

Dr. Jackie Atkins is known throughout the beef industry for her expertise in animal breeding and genetics. Beyond her role as Director of Science and IGS Operations, Dr. Atkins is trained in leadership and professional development. This new, regular column in the Register will combine these two passions, offering valuable insights on building a positive, grounded life in the beef industry and beyond.

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 ASA



by Larry H. Maxey, founder, NAILE Fullblood Simmental Shows

Our Pioneers – The Unsung

By the time you read this article, Thanksgiving will be near. Each of us has long lists of things to be grateful for on this special holiday. We are so fortunate to have this wonderful country to call home. May the holiday season bring blessings to all.

In this 55th edition of the “Our Pioneers” series, I want to remind our many readers that this column is a forum, or “public square,” where we encourage feedback. This includes your own stories about people, places, and things that have had an impact on your lives as it relates to farming and ranching. We have received some interesting stories over the years, and many have been featured here. Sometimes, I fear that I have created a misconception about the nature of the subjects we cover to only include great things, people, or achievements. That is not the case.

There are many remarkable people who formed the backbone of this great nation who may never have received rewards or honors, but were nonetheless as important as those who did. In an effort to provide an example of this, and perhaps spawn your own memories of similar people, I offer these two stories. You won’t find these people on any lists of the rich and famous, but they are foundational to our great society.

He was born in 1892. By the time I met him he was already over 70 years old. The only name he went by was “Happy.” Once you knew him you quickly realized why he received that nickname. From his persona, one would never know of his extremely difficult life. As a neighbor, I would help him with farm chores from time to time. At rest, he would recount the many stories of his struggles. He raised cattle, grew tobacco, and was still farming with a team of mules. I must admit the only instances where he would lose his temper was dealing with those mules. Of course, I wasn’t any help in that department at all. But somehow the mules eventually did what he wanted, and they were friends at the end of the day when it was time for their grain.

In the early 1900s, he and his family were tending tobacco crops. He said one was lucky to get five cents per pound. Then, World War I came around. The US mobilized millions of soldiers once we entered that war and free cigarettes were provided by the government. Demand for tobacco skyrocketed. Thus, supply and demand created a sudden spike in the price of tobacco that the farmers received. Happy said he sold tobacco for a dollar per pound in 1918. He and countless other farmers received a windfall that year. With his proceeds, he purchased his first farm. He and his young family did well for a few years. After the war, the demand for tobacco fell, as well as prices. When the Great Depression hit, still owing \$500 on his farm, he went bust and lost it all. He said, “there wasn’t \$500 in the whole county.”

In spite of the setbacks, he persevered. Price stabilization for tobacco and other crops was established in the 1930s and this provided some relief. Happy continued, always with a positive attitude. Tobacco and cattle were his mainstay. He had many stories of hardships but at the conclusion of each, he would laugh and just chalk it up as a lesson learned. Above all else, he remained optimistic and grateful for his blessings.

She was born in 1910. Everyone knew her as “Bea,” short for Beatrice. I came to know her in the 1970s as our neighbor. She lived alone. Her husband had died and her son lived far away. She was unable to continue farming. For many years we leased her property for grazing, cropping, and hay. I would see her and have long conversations on a regular basis. Her stories were endless and interesting.

She lost her father due to an accident when she was only a child. Her mother moved with her from the city to be with her family in the country. They were not wealthy people, but got along fairly well. Somehow, they managed to send Bea to college. Very rare in those days and especially in these parts. Life as a young girl was filled with farm chores. To survive, everyone worked, and it was hard. But there were no complaints, she said. It was what was expected.

I recall her stories of getting to and from college. Every Sunday evening, she would travel by buggy to the train station in Morning View. The train took her to Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond. Her mother prepared food packed in a small basket, which was meant to last a week. On Friday evening, she would reboard the train and return to Morning View and the waiting buggy. This cycle was repeated weekly over the years until she graduated. She received her degree in education and became a teacher. Eventually, she became principal of the elementary school. She was well known and respected by all.

Farming was a big part of her life as well. She chuckled telling me about how she and her husband started a dairy. With the back seat of their car removed, they went to Pennsylvania and purchased four bucket calves, all straight-bred Brown Swiss heifers. They returned with the calves packed in the area where the seat should have been. That turned out to be the foundation of their Brown Swiss dairy herd. I believe that dairy lasted for over 50 years. They also ran a beef herd of mostly Hereford cattle.

Bea lived into her mid-90s. She was always cheerful with a quick wit and eager to carry on conversation. In spite of her hardship-filled life, she remained optimistic to the end, just like Happy. While Bea and Happy never made it to a hall of fame, or public acclaim, these individuals deserve to be recognized here in our “Pioneers” series along with countless other unsung pioneers who were the backbone of our great nation. We hope to hear from our readers with similar stories they might share with us. Have a happy and wonderful Thanksgiving. ■

Editor’s note: This is the fifty-fifth in the series Our Pioneers.

Is there a Simmental pioneer who you would like to see profiled in this series? Reach out to Larry Maxey or the editor to submit your suggestions:

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^aUSMARC, Zimmerman, M., et al., "Breed and heterotic effects for mature weight in beef cattle," J. of Anim. Sci., Vol. 99, 2021. ^bEffect of sire breed group on carcass value of feedlot cattle harvested through Tri-County Steer Carcass Futurity Cooperative, Lewis, Iowa, 2002 to 2018, Odde, K. & King, M. (March 2021), Kansas State University.

STAND STRONG SIMMENTAL

DNA Testing Requirements for Herdsires

In January, ASA membership voted to require a DNA test (GGP-100K genomic panel) on all herd bulls/natural service sires born on or after January 1, 2025. This new rule mimics the current DNA requirement for AI sires and donor dams.

Although the rule change isn't immediately affecting membership, it is never too early to prepare. By collecting and submitting DNA samples on bull calves born this spring and beyond if they'll go on to sire registered calves, producers can avoid future issues.

ASA Conducts Internal Parentage Audit

As part of our ongoing commitment to industry's best practices and continuous improvement, ASA is conducting an audit of its DNA parentage verification processes. This effort includes a review of historical parentage records to ensure consistency and reliability as our database continues to evolve with additional testing over time.

Through this audit, we identified a small number of parentage inconsistencies affecting a limited fraction of DNA-tested animals. These cases primarily stem from historical practices in which parentage was verified at a single point in time, often against only one parent, and subsequent additions of a second parent's DNA did not automatically trigger re-verification. Importantly, this review has no impact on other DNA-based services. Genomically enhanced EPD and trait testing remain unaffected.

If any of your animals are involved in this review, you will be contacted directly by the ASA DNA team with specific information and recommended next steps. The vast majority of these cases are straightforward and can be resolved through standard collaboration, and we are confident in reaching appropriate outcomes.

Members are encouraged to ensure their contact information is current, including email address, mailing address, and phone numbers on all associated accounts, so that ASA staff can communicate efficiently if needed. Keeping this information up-to-date helps ensure timely and accurate communication. If you have questions, please feel free to contact the ASA office at 406-587-4531 and select Option 1.

DNA Test Now Available for Hydrops

The American Simmental Association is now offering a DNA test for the Hydrops condition. Beginning July 14, 2026, members can order the \$34 stand-alone test on the DNA order form at simmental.org. The expected turnaround time will be four weeks.

Descendants of WS All Aboard B80 (ASA# 2852207) are at risk for carrying the genetic abnormality. Females who carry the mutation may develop a serious condition during late gestation that results in excess fluid in the fetal membrane. This typically causes the loss of the calf and occasionally the dam. With the support of the ASA Board of Trustees, ASA staff has been working closely with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to identify the mutation responsible for Hydrops, and now GeneSeek has developed a commercially available test based on these findings. As part of developing the test, GeneSeek tested a batch of DNA samples from WS All Aboard descendants and those results were loaded into Trait Trac.

The Hydrops test is available to ASA members at cost. This decision — made by the ASA Board of Trustees and ASA leadership — supports the identification of this serious, costly

condition. The Association has invested significant funding and time in the development of this test, and wanted to ensure that testing is as accessible as possible for members and commercial producers who may have purchased a SimGenetics bull with potential carrier daughters in their herd.

For questions regarding established WS All Aboard B80 genetics, Hydrops symptoms, reporting an active case, or additional information, please visit the Hydrops Information Center or reach out to Jackie Atkins at jatkins@simmgene.com. To order a test, visit simmental.org.

DNA Test for Bovine Congestive Heart Failure (BCHF) Risk Now Available

A test estimating a genomic prediction for risk for development of Bovine Congestive Heart Failure (BCHF) is now available as an add-on to the GGP100K (\$9.50) or a standalone test (\$19.50). This is not an IGS prediction but molecular breeding value based on the Simplot and Neogen partnership studying heart failure in feedlot cattle. Because this is a molecular breeding value, results will be based solely on the DNA marker information and will not include other pertinent information that goes into EPD like pedigree, breed, and performance records. The test returns a molecular breeding value for risk of progeny developing heart scores correlated to BCHF (lower number is better). The average accuracy of animals tested is 0.32 (standard deviation 0.09). At this time the results will be reported through an email but not uploaded to Herdbook. Please contact Jackie Atkins at jatkins@simmgene.com with any questions.

Seeking Sire Nominations for CMP

Looking to test your top young sire across different environments? Want to enhance accuracy and gain valuable data on your young sire? The Carcass Merit Program (CMP) is for you!

Since 1997, the CMP has relied on select cooperator herds to test sires; however, ASA recently added a new CMP testing avenue, which will allow for MORE SIREs to be tested annually. CMP collects vital carcass data on calves, which improves carcass trait predictions and DNA marker predictions for all cattle in the IGS genetic evaluation, and supports breeders in evaluating their young sires and advancing their genetic programs. If you're interested in nominating a sire, fill out the nomination form at simmental.org (Programs, ASA Programs, CMP).

Steps to Keep Your Account in Active Status

ASA's fiscal year ended on June 30, which means you likely noticed the Annual Service Fee (ASF) charged to your Herdbook account. There are two important steps to remain an active member:

1. Pay your Annual Service Fee.
2. Register and/or transfer at least one animal record within two years.

Your account must be in an active status in order to elect trustees from your region and to vote on Rule and Bylaw amendments. If you have any questions, contact ASA's Membership Department at 406-587-4531 or members@simmgene.com.

Check-Off Bonus Program Reminder

While the July 15 deadline to submit all state association program requests seems far away, it's a good time for state associations to familiarize themselves with the check-off bonus program. Aside from the quarterly check-off money states can receive, state associations are also eligible for additional money in the form of yearly bonus checks if certain activities are completed throughout the year. Examples include hosting a field day with ASA representation and participating in the cost share program. To learn about the check-off bonus program, visit simmental.org and contact stateassoc@simmgene.com with any questions.

2026 Year-Letter is P

In accordance with the Beef Improvement Federation guidelines, the year-letter animal identification for 2026 is P, and will be followed by R in 2027, and S in 2028. The letter N was the year-letter designated during 2025. Per BIF guidelines, the following letters are not used: I, O, Q, and V.

Office Holiday Schedule

Thursday, November 26 & Friday, November 27

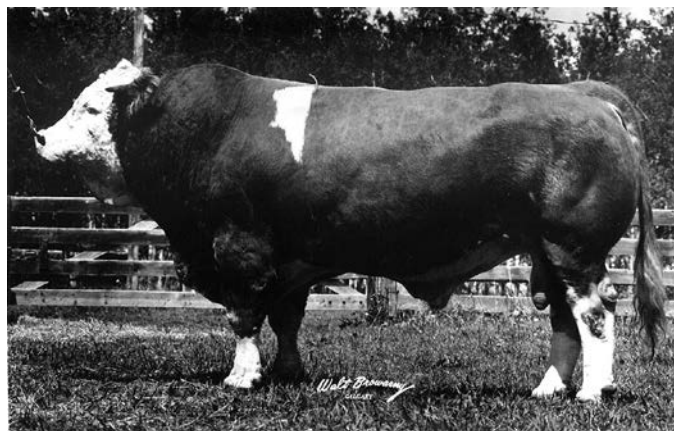
Thanksgiving

Wednesday, December 23, Thursday, December 24 & Friday, December 25

Christmas ■

Remembering the history of the Simmental breed and its people.

Following the import of Parisien, the first Simmental bull in North America, leaders in the new breed continued efforts to bring in new genetics. Semen companies like ABS were instrumental in this effort, supporting both the sourcing and future business of these genetics. Ray Woodard, a member of the founding ASA Board of Trustees, imported Bismark, registration number "2," for ABS in 1967. Bismark became an extremely influential sire in the breed. ■



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Cargill Profits Drop

Cargill's first-quarter profit was \$927 million, dropping by more than half. Two of the company's inputs were identified as driving this drop: beef and cocoa. With the US cattle herd at a historic low, Cargill's input cost has been at a record high. Cargill cited "market-to-market" losses — a misalignment between input costs and finished goods — as the reason for losses in cocoa. Futures for the commodity climbed over 70% from June to August, which followed already record-high prices. This killed demand, which has not bounced back.

Price-fixing Case Challenged by Packers

National Beef, Tyson Foods, and Cargill are challenging a Minnesota judge's certification of a nationwide beef price-fixing antitrust case. Ranchers are pushing back, urging the court to reject these efforts to derail the case. The packers argue that the district court shifted the burden from the plaintiffs to the defendants in their attempt to prove injury. One of these specific claims pointed to the use of feedlot data instead of data from individual cattle owners, who make up the class in the lawsuit. In their appeal, the packers said that by analyzing feedlot data, which includes people and businesses who only buy and sell cattle on behalf of others, the information was skewed away from the actual class in the lawsuit. A series of lawsuits have been filed against packers, beginning in 2019.

Fake USDA Stamp Causes Recall

The USDA recalled more than 83 tons of meat, including beef, after inspectors discovered a fake USDA stamp on the products. The products were shipped to a Georgia distributor, A&D Foods, which then sent products to restaurants and retail locations across the nation. The USDA cited potential allergens, bacteria, and other food safety concerns as reasons for the recall, and said the products should be considered misbranded and unsafe to eat. The establishment number "EST. 1363" was identified as the false USDA marker.

Star Meat Delivery, based out of Lucama, North Carolina, recalled thousands of pounds of product, but pushed back on the recall, claiming that the stamp in question was "legitimately reserved" as a part of the company's USDA application process while it seeks approval to process and package meat for A&D Foods. ■

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Improving Weaned Calf Health through Genetics

by Audrey Tarochione, Iowa State University Beef Center

Every producer knows that sinking feeling of spotting a calf that looks like he just doesn't feel good. Even if we use good management practices and cross our fingers, calves still get sick every now and then. Bovine respiratory disease (BRD) is a multifactorial disease caused by a culmination of stress, viral agents, and bacterial infections. Especially relevant to weaned calf health, BRD costs the US feedlot industry approximately \$1 billion annually in production losses. Management is key to minimizing the impacts of stress around weaning, but some of these stressors are intrinsic to the beef industry: separation from the dam, diet changes, transportation, etc.

There is a genetic component to respiratory health, meaning selection for BRD resilience is possible. In a recent study on calf health in weaned seedstock calves, disease incidence was defined as a binary phenotype, where a calf either remained healthy during the post-weaning period or required one or more treatments for BRD. The heritability of BRD incidence was estimated to be 0.074. As with most health traits, heritability estimates of BRD traits are generally low, but this estimate is still meaningful. Progress will be slow, but over time, permanent improvement can be made in the health of your calves through genetic selection.

Currently there are no BRD EPD published by breed associations. Multiple challenges contribute to this limitation:

1. Loss of data when calves are sold: When ownership of calves is transferred, data is lost, including pedigree and early-life information. The majority of calves are sold less than 45 days after weaning, when they are still at risk of BRD. While feedlots can maintain solid treatment records, this information is not enough to run a genetic evaluation. Pedigree and/or genotype data, in conjunction with phenotypes, are necessary to develop an EPD.
2. No phenotyping guidelines: Due to limited research, it is still unclear how BRD should be evaluated. A variety of terminology is used, such as BRD incidence, resilience, number of treatments, and severity. Each of these traits differs slightly in definition, phenotype collection, and statistical analysis. More research is needed to determine the trait that provides the most benefit to genetic improvement.
3. Detecting BRD can be difficult: Cattle are adept at hiding illness, making visual detection of sick calves both an art and a science. Even the best pen rider can't catch all BRD cases in a timely manner. Subclinical BRD is also known to depress feedlot performance. However, these cases go undetected unless lung lesions are scored at harvest. Advances in technology now make it easier to find sick calves. Detection aids, like wearable sensors, can flag BRD cases multiple days before visual observation and pick up a portion of subclinical illness.

The development of a BRD EPD is not out of the question, but challenges in data collection and trait definition need to be addressed. It will take effort and teamwork throughout all sectors of the beef industry. What can producers do? It starts with good record-keeping! At the cow-calf level, animal identification and

pedigree information are critical. For feedlots, this includes BRD detection and individual animal treatment records. Beyond this, we need to improve connectivity and data flow between the segments of the beef industry. Tools like EID tags can help tie health events to a verified ID and follow that animal through each segment of the industry. Working with breed associations, marketing programs, feedlots, and data management providers can help to generate connected datasets. Over time, that consistency and data accumulation will make a reliable and practical BRD EPD achievable.

When to Cull Bulls

by Amanda L Cauffman, University of Wisconsin Extension

It is common practice this time of year to evaluate our cows to make culling decisions, but this is also a good time to evaluate our bulls to determine which sires we are going to feed through the winter and which have come to the end of their genetic contribution to the operation.

Bulls, much like cows, can live ten to 12 years. Most bulls will remain active in the herd for closer to four or five years due to feet and leg, structural, and fertility problems, temperament concerns, or injuries. The decision to cull many bulls happens in the spring after failing a breeding soundness exam. However, producers can save input costs by culling bulls in the fall if they or their offspring have any undesirable characteristics that would make them unsuitable for the next breeding season.

Most mature breeding bulls can maintain condition with the same winter management as the cow herd. However, since mature bulls tend to weigh more than our average cow, you can expect their per head dry matter intake to be more as well. If we assume a bull will consume roughly 2% of his body weight in dry matter per day and that a mature bull weighs about 1,800 pounds, they will consume about 36 pounds of dry matter daily for the nine months they are not actively breeding cows. If we know a bull has a problem it is best to cull him sooner rather than later instead of sinking more input costs into him.

Attitude problems and feet and leg issues are two reasons why bulls should be culled sooner rather than later. If a bull is aggressive it may be in the best interest to our operation and to the safety of ourselves, employees, and other livestock to cull the bull. It is important to understand that docility is a heritable trait. As a bull matures and gains weight they may develop feet and structural issues that may limit their ability to effectively breed cows. It may be advantageous to cull those bulls now instead of waiting to see how they pull through the winter season.

Culling bulls with undesirable traits allows producers to invest in genetics that will have a genetic improvement to the cow herd. It is important to understand that the bull contributes to 90% of the gene pool and has more of a genetic contribution to the herd in one year than a cow will have in her lifetime. There is a concept among some producers where the thought process is, "the bull is paid for and regardless of his issues I am going to continue to use him." The problem with this concept is that every year the bull is allowed to contribute his genetics to the herd he is passing along his negative traits as well. Buying a new bull has the potential to be more profitable if the new bull possesses the genetics to improve reproductive performance, growth rate, or carcass traits to name a few.

Culling bulls this fall that have reached the end of their genetic contribution to the operation not only has a positive impact on this year's income but can lead to long-term profitability in the cow herd.

Managing First-Calf Heifers: Setting Two-Year-Old Cows Up for Success

by Haley Linder, PhD, Ohio State University

Our expectations of first-calf heifers are high. We ask a two-year-old cow to calve for the first time, rebreed on time to maintain a 365-day calving interval, and continue growing all at the same time. On top of that, there is significant financial pressure on this animal. She has not yet generated income in the form of a weaned calf, and every input to this point has been an investment.

First-calf heifers are typically the highest-need animals in the herd. The question producers should be asking is: are they getting the attention they deserve? Nutrient requirements for a two-year-old cow are greater than those of a mature cow because she is still undergoing structural growth. At the same time, lactation places a substantial demand on energy and nutrients. Milk production pulls nutrients away from the cow to support calf growth, and when resources are limited, the cow must prioritize where nutrients are allocated.

Cattle follow a biological hierarchy for nutrient use. Maintenance and lactation come first, followed by growth, with reproduction at the bottom of the list. If a first-calf heifer cannot meet her nutritional requirements for maintenance, milk production, and continued growth, reproductive performance will suffer. This often shows up as delayed estrus, lower conception rates, or failure to rebreed altogether.

Body condition score (BCS) is one of the most effective tools producers have for evaluating whether first-calf heifers are nutritionally prepared to rebreed. Because reproduction sits low on the nutrient priority list, body condition at calving and during early lactation plays a major role in determining how quickly a heifer resumes estrous cycles.

For first-calf heifers, a BCS of 6 at calving is the target. This slightly higher condition compared to mature cows helps buffer the heifer against the energy demands of early lactation and continued growth. Heifers that calve too thin have limited reserves to draw from and are more likely to lose additional condition after calving.

By the start of the breeding season, first-calf heifers should ideally be at BCS 5 or greater. Heifers below this threshold often experience delayed return to estrus, reduced conception rates, or require additional time and expense to get bred.

It is important to remember that it is far easier and cheaper to maintain condition than to rebuild it, especially during early lactation when nutrient demands are at their peak. When first-calf heifers enter the breeding season thin or actively losing condition, nutritional intervention is needed quickly. The goal is not rapid weight gain, but rather to slow or stop condition loss and improve energy balance.

1. Evaluate Forage Quality and Intake

Spring forage may look abundant, but energy intake can still be limiting, particularly early in the grazing season when forage

is immature and intake is restricted. Testing hay or pasture can help identify whether energy or protein is limiting performance. Thin heifers often need more energy, not just more protein.

2. Prioritize Energy Supplementation

Energy is typically the first limiting nutrient for lactating, growing heifers. Supplement options may include:

- Corn or other cereal grains
- Byproduct feeds such as distillers grains, soy hulls, or corn gluten feed
- Energy-dense commercial supplements

The most effective supplements are those that increase total dietary energy without significantly reducing forage intake.

3. Separate Management Pays Off

Managing first-calf heifers separately allows producers to:

- Reduce social and feed competition
- Provide supplements more consistently
- Monitor body condition more closely

This targeted approach is often one of the most cost-effective management tools for improving reproductive success in young cows. First-calf heifers operate with little margin for error. They are growing, lactating, and expected to rebreed. Maintaining adequate body condition through calving and into the breeding season is one of the strongest predictors of success. Strategic nutritional management, especially for thin heifers, can pay dividends through improved conception rates, tighter calving intervals, and greater lifetime productivity. ■

Won't Buy Discolored Meat? You Might be Adding to Significant Global Waste

by Christopher Outcalt, Colorado State University

Each year, about one-third of the food produced globally is lost or wasted — a staggering statistic given the increasing demands to feed a growing population and the strain on water, labor, and other critical resources needed to produce food worldwide. The waste amounts to an estimated 429 million pounds each year in the United States alone, and there are many factors contributing to the problem.

Meat is a particular concern because it's perishable, and is generally more resource intensive to produce than other types of food. Mahesh Nair, associate professor of animal sciences in Colorado State University's (CSU) College of Agricultural Sciences, is focused on solving one aspect of this wasted-meat equation: beef that is discolored, not spoiled, but is nevertheless discarded from grocery stores and homes.

"I hope by the end of my career I'll have made a real dent in this," said Nair, who has researched this topic extensively since arriving at CSU in 2017.

Nair researches consumer habits and preferences, options for alternative packaging, and the role of bacteria play in meat discoloration. Consumers, particularly in the US, prefer products such as steaks and ground beef that have a bright, cherry-red color; they tend not to buy meat that is at all brownish, even just in spots. The problem is that most slightly discolored meat remains safe. However, because consumers won't buy it, stores will either heavily discount the meat or throw it away altogether.

"This is a major challenge, and retailers are really starting to recognize this," said Scott Howard, director of quality assurance and process improvement at Meyer Natural Foods in Loveland. "Having people like Mahesh working on the science and, more importantly, understanding consumer perception, is critical to solving this problem."

In a recent study in which Nair was involved, the authors estimated that \$2.55 billion is lost annually due to discolored meat being discarded from retail stores in the US. They estimated another \$1.18 billion is lost due to stores needing to discount prices. "That's really the challenge — that this discoloration can start before the meat is actually spoiled," Nair said. "Color alone is not an indicator of spoilage. But stores won't take the chance; they don't want to have a bunch of brown meat sitting in their case."

Consumers who are concerned about deciphering whether meat has gone bad, Nair said, should focus on odor and slime: If the meat smells bad or is slimy, it's not good to consume.

Vacuum sealing is a packaging option that can delay discoloration but is not preferred by consumers. Over the years, Nair's work on this topic has focused on three main areas: surveying consumer habits and preferences, investigating options for alternative packaging, and better understanding the role bacteria play in meat spoilage and discoloration. All three, he said, could help reduce food waste.

Nair has conducted multiple consumer-preference studies to learn more about what might influence shoppers to purchase meat that is slightly discolored. Overall, Nair said, studies show that 20% discoloration on the surface of a steak will cause consumers

to begin to consider another option; at 40% discoloration, consumers likely reject the meat altogether. Another challenge, Nair said, is that some steaks will brown more quickly than others; for instance, a tenderloin browns faster than a New York strip.

Notably, Nair said, in a recent study, nearly all the consumers who participated indicated they would consider buying a discolored beef steak after someone explained that color alone is not an indicator of the quality of the meat or whether it is safe to consume. Nair has also found in studies that men tend to be more forgiving than women when it comes to purchasing slightly brown meat.

"We really want to understand what is driving these purchasing decisions so that we can consider how we can better educate consumers," Nair said.

Nair has extensively studied the issue of meat discoloration in his lab at CSU. Altering how meat is packaged is another option. Exposure to oxygen, which interacts with a protein in the meat called myoglobin, leading to its oxidation, is part of what causes meat to brown. Vacuum packaging can help delay the effect.

This type of packaging is more common in Europe, but is not widely used in the US. The beef industry, Nair said, is hesitant to adopt something consumers might not be familiar or comfortable with.

Moving away from the traditional overwrap Styrofoam tray packaging used on most ground beef, Howard said, would greatly improve the situation, helping not only with financial losses but also with industry efforts to become more sustainable. "There is no single thing we could do that would have a bigger impact than this change that Mahesh is investigating," Howard said. "I'm fully convinced of that."

The relationship between bacterial growth and discoloration is a key focus of research for Nair, who monitors bacteria in petri dishes in his lab.

Nair is also conducting experiments in his lab at CSU to better understand whether there might be a way to manipulate bacteria to delay the browning process. "One of the bigger projects we're doing right now is trying to better understand the relationship between bacterial growth and color," Nair said. "We used to treat bacteria and color separately, but our data is showing there's crossover. This might be an area where we can move the needle on discoloration, and we have several follow-up studies in the pipeline."

Nair is also in the process of collaborating with the National Cattleman's Beef Association to conduct a nationwide consumer survey on these topics to dig further into consumer preference and behavior.

"There's a lot of interest in this topic," Nair said. "Whenever we talk to industry leaders, they all want a solution."

Two Bacterial Pathogens Linked to Severe Liver Abscesses in Cattle

by Andrea Bedford, Bovine Veterinarian

Liver abscesses remain a challenge in feedlot cattle, affecting carcass value and production efficiency. New research suggests that the bacterial species found together in an abscess may help explain differences in lesion severity.

(Continued on page 50)

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(Continued from page 48)

Researchers examined liver abscesses of varying severity, along with ruminal and colonic epithelial tissues, to investigate the prevalence and concentrations of major bacterial pathogens. Their findings point to differences in bacterial combinations between mild and severe abscesses, although the reasons for those differences remain unclear.

How Bacterial Combinations May Influence Liver Abscess Severity

Fusobacterium necrophorum was detected in nearly all liver abscesses, regardless of severity. Using quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR), researchers detected the bacterium in 96.7% of severe abscesses and 90.9% of mild abscesses. Concentrations did not differ significantly between the two groups.

These findings suggest that the presence or concentration of *F. necrophorum* alone may not explain why some abscesses become more severe. Researchers also examined *Trueperella pyogenes*, another bacterium associated with liver abscesses. Culture-based testing identified *T. pyogenes* in 42.1% of severe abscesses, compared with 26.1% of mild abscesses. Quantitative PCR showed a similar trend, although the difference did not reach statistical significance.

The combination of *F. necrophorum*, subsp. *necrophorum*, and *T. pyogenes* was more common in severe abscesses. Researchers observed a similar pattern involving *F. necrophorum* and *Salmonella enterica*.

Together, these findings suggest that bacterial combinations may be associated with lesion severity. Further research is needed to determine whether these combinations contribute directly to disease progression or reflect other factors influencing abscess development.

Do Ruminal and Colonic Bacteria Predict Liver Abscess Severity?

Because liver abscess development is linked to bacteria moving from the gastrointestinal tract to the liver, researchers also evaluated ruminal and colonic epithelial tissues. They found no significant associations between abscess severity and the prevalence or concentration of the pathogens measured in either tissue. The results did not reveal a clear relationship between these bacterial measurements and the severity of liver lesions.

The findings do not rule out a role for gastrointestinal health or barrier function in abscess development. They indicate that the specific bacterial measurements used in this study did not explain differences in lesion severity.

What Liver Abscess Research Means for Feedlot Veterinarians

The findings add to the understanding of liver abscess development, but they do not establish a new diagnostic test or prevention protocol. Several practical considerations emerge from the research:

- Review slaughter data. Tracking liver abscess prevalence and severity across groups can help identify patterns over time and support herd-level management discussions.
- Interpret bacterial findings in context. *F. necrophorum* was common in both mild and severe abscesses, while *T. pyogenes* was more frequently identified in severe cases. These associations do not establish that either bacterium causes more severe lesions.

- Keep emerging diagnostic tools in perspective. Blood-based biomarkers have shown some potential, but further validation is needed before they can reliably guide individual-animal decisions.

Because the bacterial findings came from abscesses collected at slaughter, the study does not establish a way to identify affected animals before harvest.

Can Blood Tests or Genetics Predict Liver Abscesses in Cattle?

Other research supported by the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR) has explored blood biomarkers, genetic susceptibility and gastrointestinal tissue characteristics as potential ways to better understand liver abscess risk.

In a 2024 study, researchers evaluated blood samples from 207 beef-on-dairy heifers, including 94 with liver abscesses and 113 without. Heifers with abscesses had lower white blood cell and lymphocyte concentrations and a higher platelet-to-lymphocyte ratio. Serum chemistry measurements did not differ according to abscess presence or severity.

A multivariable model combining white blood cell, basophil, and red blood cell measurements with procalcitonin achieved 80.65% accuracy and 85.71% specificity. The authors noted that model performance, blood sampling costs, and practical considerations could limit its usefulness. Further validation is needed before this approach can be applied routinely.

Genetic research has also investigated whether susceptibility to liver abscesses could be inherited. A preliminary study of 1,492 beef-on-dairy heifers estimated heritability at effectively zero. However, the analysis included a limited number of sires and lacked complete dam pedigree information, limiting the conclusions that could be drawn.

A separate study compared ruminal papillae morphology in heifers with and without liver abscesses. Researchers found no significant differences in papillae number, average area, or absorptive surface area. Abscess severity and location were also unrelated to the measured characteristics.

Collectively, these studies have not yet identified a reliable way to predict which animals will develop liver abscesses. Blood markers, genetic susceptibility, and gastrointestinal tissue characteristics remain research areas rather than established tools for routine risk assessment.

What's Next for Liver Abscess Prevention in Feedlot Cattle?

The bacterial findings raise new questions about the relationship between the organisms present in an abscess and the progression of the lesion. Future research will need to determine whether particular bacterial combinations contribute to more severe disease and whether those patterns can help identify opportunities for prevention.

Until then, veterinarians can use slaughter outcomes to monitor abscess prevalence and severity over time, alongside established herd health, feeding, and rumen-management practices. Connecting emerging microbiological findings with practical management approaches remains an important next step in reducing liver abscesses and their production costs. ■

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Recent Australian Beef Import Trends

by Dr. Charley Martinez, King Ranch Institute for Ranch Management; Southern Ag Today

Australian beef has become an increasingly significant presence in the US import market. In 2022, Australia contributed 401.8 million pounds, roughly 12% of total US beef imports. Australia's share of imports has steadily grown since then, reaching 25% of total imports in 2025, and the trend shows no signs of reversing in 2026.

Australia's beef imports as a share of total monthly US beef imports in 2025, 2026, and the five-year average from 2020 to 2024. Historically, Australian beef represented a relatively steady 13% to 21% of monthly US imports. In 2025, that share climbed well above that historical norm, rising sharply through the second half of the year and peaking near 32% before finishing December around 31%. So far in 2026, the pattern has followed a similar seasonal trend, dipping in the early months before recovering, with recent months tracking above the same period in 2025. Taken together, the data makes clear that Australian beef now occupies a structurally larger share of the US import market than what was considered normal just a few years ago.

Trade Ports

Understanding where this beef originates can also help producers and market watchers track future import flows. Australian beef exports to the US move primarily through ports on Australia's east coast. Based on the most recent available data, which captures all Australian red meat exports but is largely driven by beef, the Port of Melbourne, Victoria,

accounted for 41% of exports. Melbourne serves as a major export gateway given the high concentration of packing facilities in the surrounding region. The Port of Brisbane, Queensland, handled 35% of exports and is one of Australia's most active meat-loading ports, home to JBS Dinmore, the largest beef processing plant in the Southern Hemisphere, along with Cargill and several other major processors in the Brisbane Valley. Port Botany in Sydney, New South Wales, accounted for 19% of exports, while the Port of Adelaide, South Australia, and the Port of Fremantle, Western Australia, represented just 3% and 1%, respectively. The concentration of export activity through Melbourne and Brisbane reflects the infrastructure and processing capacity those regions have built to supply export markets, including an increasingly hungry US import market.

What Does This Mean?

More imported beef means more competition for space in the domestic market, especially for cull cows and bulls. While the majority of imports have been lean beef trimmings for ground beef, muscle cuts are also imported, which would compete more directly with fed beef. Imports are of particular interest now, as the US cow herd sits near historic lows following years of liquidation driven by drought and high input costs. Domestic producers might have rebuilding in their plans, but rebuilding takes years and requires producer expectations of cattle prices to remain financially viable. At a time when tighter domestic beef supplies would normally support even stronger prices, the surge in Australian (and other countries') imports is a counterweight, tempering some of the price signals US producers are counting on to invest. ■

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Grand Champion Percentage SM Female

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THE Enrollment

Spring 2026 THE Enrollment – (dams calve January 1–June 30) –

Early enrollment open October 15 through **December 15, 2025.**

Late enrollment available until February 15, 2026.

Fall 2026 THE Enrollment – (dams calve July 1–December 31) –

Early enrollment open April 15 through **June 15, 2026.**

Late enrollment available until August 15, 2026.

	Option A (TR)	Option B (SR)	Option C	Option D (CM)
Early Enrollment	\$15.00	FREE	\$7.50	\$500/herd
*Late Enrollment	\$16.00	\$1.00	\$8.50	\$500/herd

A re-enrollment fee of \$35.00 applies to any dam that is removed from inventory and re-enters the herd at a later date.

A member who has dropped out of THE and wishes to return, may do so for the next enrollment season. Re-enrollment fee is \$35 per animal (maximum of \$350) plus enrollment fees. Non-THE registration fees will apply to the calendar year when a member did not participate in THE.

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First Time Membership Fee:

Adult First Time Membership Fee* \$160

(Includes: \$50 set-up fee and \$110 AMF)

Junior First Time Membership Fee* \$40

Prefix Registration \$10

**After January 1: \$105 for Adults and \$40 for Juniors*

Annual Service Fee (ASF)*:

Adult Membership \$110

Junior Membership \$40

Fiscal year runs from July 1 – June 30

Registration Fees:

Registration Fees enrolled in THE

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Enrolled in **Opt B or C** 10 months <15 months. ... \$40

Enrolled in **Opt B or C** >15 months \$50

Transfer Fees:

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Additional Transactions:

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(not including shipping or mailing) \$50

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Register Foundation Bull \$25

Registration Fees not enrolled in THE:

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DATE BOOK

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- 13 Keller Broken Heart Ranch's Annual Sale — Mandan, ND (pg. 57)
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JULY 2027

- 17-23 AJSA National Classic — Louisville, KY

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- 11 Burlap and Barbed Wire Vo. IX Female Sale — Clay Center, KS
- 13 R.A. Brown Ranch Bull Sale — Throckmorton, TX
- 16 The New Direction Sale — Seward, NE (pg. 56) ■

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May/June '27	March 30	April 2	April 9	May 8-13
July/August '27	May 27	June 3	June 10	July 8-12
September '27	August 3	August 6	August 13	Sept 11-16
October '27	August 17	August 20	August 27	Sept 25-30
November '27	Sept 28	Oct 1	Oct 8	Nov 6-11
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EPD: CE: 7 \$API: 101 \$TI: 66



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By OMF Epic
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By WLE Copacetic E02
EPD: CE: 13 \$API: 113 \$TI: 76



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By KLER Greater Good 2064K
EPD: CE: 6 \$API: 123 \$TI: 91



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By Reckoning 711F
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By SFI Platinum F5Y
EPD: CE: 7 \$API: 90 \$TI: 61



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By Woodford
EPD: CE: 15 \$API: 153 \$TI: 87



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By WLE Copacetic E02
EPD: CE: 14 \$API: 154 \$TI: 93



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By Remington Secret Weapon 185
EPD: CE: 17 \$API: 122 \$TI: 74



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EPD: CE: 14 \$API: 133 \$TI: 85



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By W/C Double Down
EPD: CE: 8 \$API: 98 \$TI: 70



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EPD: CE: 8 \$API: 130 \$TI: 80



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EPD: CE: 17 \$API: 154 \$TI: 83



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