

IPT Bull Sale Requirements Most Stringent In Seed-Stock Industry

URBANA, ILL.

Buyers attending the 2012 Illinois Performance-Tested Bull Sale will find some of the most elite performance bulls offered anywhere in the seed-stock industry, said Dave Seibert, sale manager.

"This is verified by the past eight years in which only 90 percent of the nominated bulls made it into the sale catalog and only 64 percent were eligible for the IPT Bull Sale," Seibert said.

The first 10 percent were eliminated at entry time when bulls must meet a minimum six-trait EPD Power Score. In order to pass over the first hurdle, bulls must have their weights and measurements processed through their respective breed association to develop EPDs. However, just being on these programs is not enough because the weights and measurements must be taken between certain age limits and be from contemporary groups with sufficient size, he added.

"To be eligible for the sale, breeders must make their first evaluation at birth with securing a birth weight and scoring the delivery of the calf for calving ease. With the majority of bulls sold each year being yearlings and most often used on virgin heifers or first calf females, the traits of birth weight and calving ease are critically important," Seibert said.

In the 2012 sale, over 52 percent of the bulls are eligible to be used on heifers. Another trait pertaining to calving ease that yearling bulls must meet is a minimum adjusted pelvic area of 140 square centimeters. This is a measure of the birthing canal that the calf must pass through, he said.

"One of the most important records to enter the IPT sale is for breeders to take weaning weights to evaluate the growth of the calf along with the milking ability of the dam. Also at this time, conformation, structural soundness, disposition, frame score, and scrotal circumference are considered on bull calves," he said.

According to Seibert, a number of traits are evaluated at yearling time, and these eliminate the most bulls from the sale. One of these traits measures growth rate and is based on adjusted yearling weight and weight-per-day of age (WDA). Growth potential of the bulls in the IPT sale is verified by the high percentage of bulls that fall in the upper one-third or higher for Yearling Weight EPDs. Backing up the EPDs are the many adjusted yearling weights in the 1,300 and 1,400 range with a few exceeding 1,500 pounds.

"Reproduction traits are critical for breeding bulls, and the one of most importance is scrotal circumference. The IPT sale has some of the most stringent scrotal requirements in the industry. The minimum far exceed those recom-

mended by the Society of Theriogenology. Also, all bulls over 12 months of age must pass a Breeding Soundness Evaluation (BSE)," he said.

Unique to the IPT sale is a frame window that bulls must fit into in order to be eligible to sell. This frame window is from 5.0 to 7.9 and results in the production of a more uniform calf crop as the result of moderate-sized bulls, he noted.

The carcass traits of marbling and ribeye area have become increasingly important in recent years with the development of branded beef programs. For the Angus breed, all IPT bulls must be scanned for carcass traits or DNA samples evaluated for these traits. Even though EPDs for the traits are provided, and the most accurate there are several bulls in the sale with very large adjusted ribeye areas in the 19 and 20 square-inch range and several with very high levels of percent intramuscular fat, he said.

"Making sure bulls do not transmit disease to their new herd is extremely important to bull buyers. For this all bulls in the IPT sale must be tested for bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) using the persistently infected (PI) ear notch screen system. Also, the dam of the bull must test negative for Johne's disease," he said.

Breeding bulls must have the ability to travel over various terrains to breed females in a pasture setting. The IPT sale hires a beef cattle specialist from the University of Missouri to screen the bulls for structural soundness during processing. For the 2011 sale, three bulls were eliminated due to not meeting the soundness requirements, he noted.

As a result of the various requirements listed above, from weaning until the sale in Springfield, an additional 26 percent of the bulls are screened out and not eligible for the sale, he said.

One comment that Seibert hears each year at the sale is: Why is a certain bull not in the sale? The answer is easy: They did not meet the requirements established for the IPT sale.

"I doubt if any cow-calf producer wants to buy a herd sire that does not have acceptable genetics, did not perform, or does not meet reproductive or fertility requirements," he said.

If you are a performance-minded, economics-driven cow-calf producer interested in a herd sire that will add dollars to your next calf crop, plan to attend the 2012 Illinois Performance-Tested Bull Sale on Thursday, Feb. 23, starting at 11 a.m. on the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield.

You can secure a sale catalog by contacting Dave Seibert, sale manager, at 309-339-3694 (seibertd@comcast.net) or view the sale catalog, bull pictures, and performance pedigrees on the web at www.IPTBullSale.com. △



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