

Reduced Cow Numbers Increase Interest In Genetic Improvement Opportunity Sale

Oct. 31 In Springfield

MT. VERNON, MO.

The summer of 2011 has seen dry weather, poor feed supplies, open cows and a sizeable reduction in beef cow numbers in southwest Missouri. However, most serious-minded cow raisers remain optimistic as cow numbers across the country are down and, unless there is a total collapse in beef demand, price prospects for the future look pretty good.

"As cow numbers are reduced, we see more interest in managing the remaining cows a bit more like a serious business. An important part of that management is to seek better genetics through sire selection either from artificial insemination or natural service bulls," said Eldon Cole, a livestock specialist with University of Missouri Extension.

Cole says it is simpler and more accurate today to make a sire selection that allows a producer to put carcass merit, growth, calving ease, milk production, temperament and other economical traits into the herd.

Expected progeny difference, EPD, is credited for much of the easier bull buying. In fact, research shows that EPDs are 7 to 9 times more effective in selecting an animal than relying on adjusted weaning or yearling weights or any

other performance measure

Now, DNA tests are being used to enhance the numbers found in the EPD's of some breeds.

"Many progressive breeders provide the complete set of EPDs to buyers and help walk them through those somewhat mysterious numbers," said Cole.

The upcoming, Southwest Missouri Beef Cattle Improvement Association's performance bull sale will provide a number of the EPDs for the 42 bulls offered at their Oct. 31 sale. Sale location is the Springfield Livestock Marketing Center, exit 70 off of I-44.

A 30-minute program will be given by extension livestock specialists Eldon Cole, Dona Goede and Andy McCorkill at 5:30 p.m. in the sale ring on sale day. They will review how farmers can use the data such as EPDs to make selections that will help them achieve their genetic goals. There will be time for questions.

Catalogs showing the data for the 38 Angus, 3 Limousin and 1 Polled Hereford bull are available at southwest Missouri extension centers or by calling sales manager, Pam Naylor at 417-345-8330 The catalog and a few pictures are also available at www.swmobcia.com. Δ



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