

# UT Bull Test Sale Offers Lessons In Beef Management

**JACKSON, TENN.** The quick twang of the auctioneer fills the room, but all eyes are on the 1600-pound Black Angus bull that just entered the sale barn. As he struts and snorts in the center ring, bids begin to fly from all directions. The auctioneer's voice rising right along with the bids, getting stronger with each jump in price, until in a final frenzy he shouts "Sold!"

As it turns out, this bull did pretty well. Gaining \$4,000, he is one of the top earners at the annual UT Senior Bull Test Sale, and an example of success from one of the state's long-running beef cattle programs.



ally an educational tool for genetics." The Bull Test Station is one of many educational tools for beef producers in the Volunteer State. Several years ago with the Tennessee Beef Cattle Improvement Initiative, a new emphasis was placed on educating farmers on issues facing the beef industry.

"We're trying to increase profitability of the producers here in Tennessee," says UT Animal Science Professor, Dr. Clyde Lane. "We feel that if we can improve their level of knowledge in beef production, that will make them more profitable."

Opportunities like the Master Beef Producer Program, give the state's farmers a chance to learn about all aspects of beef cattle production in a classroom setting.

This particular program has been very successful, enrolling more than 5,000 farmers in five years. In addition, Lane says producers can also get a "hands-on" education through programs like Forage Testing, Beef Quality Assurance and Bull Test Station.



The UT Bull Test Station has been hosting sales like this one for more than 30 years. Located at the Middle Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center, the station recruits young bulls from some of the state's top breeding programs to participate in its 84-day test. The bulls stay here at the center while researchers monitor their weight gain performance, frame size and reproductive soundness. To be eligible to sell at the end of the test, bulls must meet strict qualifications in average daily weight gain and yearling weight. This year's class of bulls completed the test with a record breaking average daily weight gain of 4.81 pounds per day. Good news for those who came to buy, and also, according to Dr. Kirkpatrick, those who came to learn.

"These folks have the ability to see what a given set of genetics looks like in a live animal," says Kirkpatrick. "So the Bull Test Station is re-

"At the Bull Test Station, bulls are tested to find those that have superior genetics, which are the bulls that meet the requirements that we're teaching producers to be looking for in Master Beef," says Lane.

Back at the sale barn, more than 60 Senior Performance Tested Bulls are auctioned. All have met the standards, and are ready for the farm. And at the end of the day, whether those in attendance buy a bull or sell one, all have the chance to see what a good bull looks like and what traits are most desired on the market. On March 12, producers will once again flock to the Bull Test Station for the Junior Bull Test Sale. And the auctioneer will have another audience of buyers, sellers. . .and learners.

For more information on the UT Bull Test Station, including results of the Junior Bull Test, visit the website <http://middletennessee.tennessee.edu> . Δ



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