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FEBRUARY 1 DEADLINE

I've had several folks tell me that they plan to develop heifers in 2005 for the Show-Me-Select Replacement Heifer program. They're hoping to sell in the November 18 sale at Joplin Regional Stockyards. If you're wanting to do the same, please notify me or your regional livestock specialist by February 1.

The state SMS annual meeting was held earlier this month and a couple of changes were voted on and passed that will have a direct bearing on participants. First, the group agreed to begin using the calving ease EPD of the Angus breed to determine eligibility of heifers for the sale. They "grandfathered" in bulls that were eligible on birth weight the past year, but bulls or semen purchased after February 1, 2005 will need to meet the calving ease EPD of 6 or higher.

The 6 calving ease (CED) EPD reflects that the bull is in the top 30th percentile for unassisted births to first-calf heifers compared to other Angus bulls. You should have very little trouble finding AI bulls that meet those criteria. Your cleanup bulls may present more of a challenge. For safety's sake, let us call up your bull's set of EPD's to see if he's eligible. Even a 1.7 birth EPD in 2004 could have moved up to 1.8 or higher this year making that bull a no-no as far as using him on SMS heifers. The exception would be if his calving ease EPD was 6 or higher.

The other change will allow the use of composite bulls as service sires on SMS heifers so long as they have breed association registration numbers and breed-developed EPDs.

MEETING NOTICE

Several of you called in about the all-natural speaker we announced for the Southwest Missouri Cattlemen's Meeting in early January. Well, he called after all the publicity had gone out and cancelled. We've rescheduled the meeting for February 10 at the Southwest Center, Mt. Vernon beginning at 7 p.m. with a catered meal. The meeting is part of the cattlemen's winter series thus there is no charge for members. Non-members are encouraged to attend, but they will be asked to pay for their meal.

OTHER MEETINGS

The Barry County Soils & Crops Conference will be February 8, 6 p.m. at the community building in Butterfield. Topics will include renovation plans for fescue, beef sire selection and cattle performance from various forages.

Taney county will hold their Livestock & Forage Conference February 24, 6 p.m. at the Panther Pit, Forsyth High School.

Dade County Soils & Crops Conference is set for February 24 also at the Senior Citizens Center in Greenfield beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The Monett Beef Cattlemen's Conference will see a change this year. The event will be February 22, but the start time is 4 p.m. I'll enclose the program in next month's letter.

A Beef Meeting will be held at the Crane Vo-Ag Room on February 17 starting at 7 p.m. At this program we hope you attend to learn and not just to eat as there is no meal. Gary Naylor, livestock specialist at Buffalo will discuss beef cattle nutrition, Dona Funk, specialist from Stockton will discuss heat synchronization and artificial insemination while I discuss crossbreeding and sire selection using EPDs and indexes.

MISSOURI BEEF AUDIT

Staff from the University of Missouri Extension and Commercial Agriculture along with funding from the Missouri Beef Industry Council have released the Missouri Beef Audit. This is a comprehensive look at the Missouri beef industry. There are about 65 pages to the report so it may take me a while to share all the good stuff in it with you. You may also go online and view the data from a link at mobeef.org.

As you know, Missouri ranks second in the nation in beef cow numbers, behind Texas. In 1920, 3.2% of the beef cows in the U.S. were in Missouri, but by 2000, 6.1% of the nation's beef cows resided in the state. In 2004 there were 645,000 head of stocker cattle in Missouri.

