

Show-Me-Select Board Approves Genomic Testing Requirement for Natural Service Sires



All bulls purchased after February 1st, 2019 for use as natural service sires in the Show-Me-Select Replacement Heifer Program™ must be DNA tested to have genomic-enhanced EPDs. All bulls used as natural service sires after February 1st, 2020 must have genomic-enhanced EPDs, regardless of when they were purchased. Seedstock producers classifying bulls as Show-Me-Select qualified in sale books must have genomic-enhanced EPDs on those lots.

Bulls purchased prior to February 1st, 2019 will be grandfathered into the program, as is the common practice with all natural service sires. However, this grandfather grace period will end February 1st, 2020. At that time for a bull to qualify for use in the program, it must have genomic-enhanced EPDs.

Why the change?

The Show-Me-Select Replacement Heifer Program has the goal of producing premium heifers that perform predictably as 2 year olds. The program has a history of requiring Show-Me-Select producers to go beyond typical cattle production practices. This has included requiring Reproductive Tract Scores on all heifers, and requiring pregnancy checks within 90 days of the start of the breeding season. The program has also specified which bulls qualify for use as natural service sires and which bulls do not. These requirements are in place to provide as predictable performance as possible.

Genomic testing increases the predictability and reliability of EPDs. In order to decrease the risk of a natural service sire not truly being a calving ease bull, we now require the use of genomic-enhanced EPDs. DNA testing provides approximately the same amount of information as 28 calving ease records or 21 birth weight records on calves out of a bull. This additional data will increase the probability of natural service sires truly being calving ease bulls.

We realize that this will add cost to the marketing of registered bulls. However, the time is right to make this change. Since 2010, the cost of DNA testing registered cattle has dropped from \$150 to \$37. Seedstock producers are encouraged to view this practice as an added measure of customer service for their bull buyers. We also note that there are multiple strategies to meet this requirement.

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