



SANTA GERTRUDIS

USA

JULY 2015 | VOLUME 18, NUMBER 7



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briggsranches@hotmail.com



777 Vegas

1/3/2014 :: 20140078 :: Polled
BW 1.2 | WW 12.6 | YW 15.2 | MILK -0.3 | TM 6.0
HCW 9.6 | MARB -0.04 | REA 0.02 | FAT 0.0 | SH.F. 0.02
GR IDX 15.65 | CRC IDX 5

Vegas is a very exciting young Santa Gertrudis herd sire out of 2013 NC High Roller. Recently in the Mid-Coast International Super Sale in Houston, Texas, 50% interest and full possession sold to Harris Riverbend Farms and Briggs Ranches for \$50,000.

His moderation in frame and "industry kind" has caught the attention of many in the Santa Gertrudis breed as well as cattlemen outside the breed both commercially and internationally. Vegas was shown across the country and won many awards as a calf, but his real recognition comes from how many have seen him and declared him "the right type" for the breed to be accepted and sold into the commercial industry.

He is backed by consistent, predictable genetics in both his sire and dam along with grandsires and granddams. He is standing and collecting at Integrated Breeders Services in Wheelock, Texas. He is putting up very viable, high quality semen. The demand is high so do not miss the opportunity to add 777 Vegas 411 into your breeding program.

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ON THE COVER

Santa Gertrudis thrive in differing environments at the King Ranch, Kingsville, Texas (left), and Stricko Ranch, Verona, Ky. (right). Photos by Darren Richmond.

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RED DOC

farm

Red Doc Farm would like to thank all of those who participated in this year's Red Hot Bull Sale. The sale was nothing short of red hot, selling 75, quality bulls, across the nation and internationally.

Thank you to Rancho La Ceiba of Mexico and Smoke N Ash Ranch of Raton, NM who partnered in purchasing record setting, Red Doc Dinero 4088. He sold over \$50k in just minutes and is already taking the bull market by storm, with semen packages selling rapidly.

Thank you also to this year's volume buyer, Berry Ranch of Eunice, NM.

They purchased an array of superior bulls and we are excited to see what they produce in the future.

Overall, the Red Hot Bull Sale was spectacular. We are thankful for the many years of friendship and support from those who have been there to witness this sale transform into something remarkable. Also, we are so happy to continue to welcome new friends. Thank you again, and we will see you at next year's sale!



Highest selling bull, Red Doc Dinero 4088- \$52K



Red Doc El Rey 3253, sold to Paul McCollaum, operation in Grenada



Volume buyers,
Danny and Libby Berry



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Ramblings from the Open Range

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By John Ford

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Profitable, Predictable and Productive

Earlier this summer, a review was conducted of the association's genetic evaluation. Livestock Genetic Services (LGS) President John Genho and I spent the day studying performance data, reviewing DNA submissions and appraising the single-step model used to formulate SGBI's genomic-enhanced expected progeny differences (EPDs). It was exciting to see the amount of information being received from membership in the form of gain test results, scan data, weaning weights and DNA samples. Equally exciting was the fact the data validates Santa Gertrudis EPDs, supporting the

claim the breed is Profitable, Predictable and Productive.

The recently completed review reminded me that a sound genetic evaluation is built on association member willingness to collect and submit performance data. After all, the foundation of the SGBI genetic evaluation is thousands of phenotypes and scan records collected by Santa Gertrudis breeders over a 25-year period. The inclusion of genetic information gleaned from DNA samples has strengthened our evaluation and has enhanced the industry's perception of our cattle. In order to sustain positive momentum, it is important

that the collection and submission of performance data and DNA samples continues. It is also important to remind breeders that data accuracy is tied to producer involvement through data submission and breeder-created contemporary groups. While not all SGBI members designate contemporary groups when registering calves, the review indicated the vast majority of SGBI members, grouping calves for comparative purposes, are forming valid groups. This ensures animal evaluation is directly related

to performance, making possible a comparison of herd mates raised under similar conditions.

What is a contemporary group and why is it worthy of examination during the genetic evaluation review? Beef Improvement Federation guidelines define a contemporary group as "a group of cattle of similar age that are of the same breed and sex and have been raised in the same management group (same location, on the same feed and pastures)." Contemporary groups are formed allowing genetic differences from one animal to another to be compared without the influence of the environment or other factors that could affect performance not attributed to genetics. The more calves in a contemporary group, the better the estimate of the average of the desired trait. Simply stated, a contemporary group is a group of animals that have an equal opportunity to perform.

Producers often struggle with contemporary group formation, assigning calves to too many or too few groups. Grouping should be kept as simple as possible, but should also account for major management differences. For example, calves produced in an improved Coastal Bermuda pasture should not be grouped with calves born and raised across the fence in a woody, brush-infested pasture. Although the groups are separated only by a fence, the animals are not on equal footing from a nutritional standpoint. Breeders also need to keep in mind contemporary groups never gain animals – groups can only get smaller and cattle can't be recombined after herd mates are separated from their defined groups. As calves get older, groups may decrease in size due to culling, sickness, death or assignment of calves to different subgroups that reflect different management practices, such as moving a calf to the barn to be fitted for a show or placing a bull on gain test. If a breeder does not assign calves to a contemporary group, based on Performance Committee recommendations, the SGBI genetic evaluation program defaults the animal(s) to a defined group.

Animals are evaluated based upon how well they perform in comparison to their herd mates raised under comparable environmental conditions. Producer-created contemporary groups serve as the foundation for formulating a sound genetic comparison. Contemporary groups are the cornerstone of genetic comparison. 🐄

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

By Wes McDaniel

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American Original

Every year I look forward to celebrating America's Independence on the Fourth of July. We are incredibly fortunate to live in a country where men and women voluntarily serve to protect our freedoms and traditions. I believe one of America's most time-honored traditions is raising cattle and, in my opinion, it doesn't get better than raising the American Original: Santa Gertrudis!

Around this time of year there is no shortage of television shows about the history of America. Of course, this could be because my television watching is limited to Braves games and the History Channel. I recently watched a series about American business pioneers Henry Ford, Cornelius Vanderbilt, J.P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie. I have always admired and enjoyed learning about successful individuals. Needless to say, they were all innovative businessmen committed to making improvements in production and providing customers with a consistent product.

It reminded me of the Santa Gertrudis breed's ties to American history. As most of you know, the Santa Gertrudis breed was developed by Robert Kleberg Jr. and Dick Kleberg. They, too, were innovative American pioneers committed to improved production and a consistent product. Their work led to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's recognition in 1940 of Santa Gertrudis as the first beef breed developed in the United States. Today, the Santa Gertrudis breed is recognized worldwide as being able to function productively in hot, humid and less than ideal environments.

We as Santa Gertrudis breeders must continue to make improvements in the production of our cattle and provide the industry with a consistent product.

The Klebergs' development of the Santa Gertrudis breed improved their cattle production and created a consistent product that met the needs of their operation and the cattle industry. We as Santa Gertrudis breeders must continue to make improvements in the production of our cattle and provide the industry with a consistent product. Everyone's operation is unique, and whether your customer is a purchaser of replacement females, a feed lot or even the sale barn, they will pay a premium for a consistent product.

Thankfully, because of these American cattle pioneers, individuals across the country and worldwide can enjoy the tradition of raising the American Original. Fortunately, through the advancement of technology and genetics, we have more accurate expected progeny differences and selection tools to make rapid improvements in production and consistency in our cattle. I encourage SGBI members to take advantage of these selection tools in their breeding programs. If you have questions about these tools, please contact SGBI.

I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable Fourth of July. As you celebrate this year, share proudly with your family and friends how your cattle are the American Original! 🇺🇸



HAPPY 4th of July!

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PF Lucky 104,
at the Kentucky Sale
later this month!

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SANTA GERTRUDIS *Juniors*

By Regan Ruddock, President



Howdy! I hope everyone had a great time at the 2015 National Jr. Santa Gertrudis Heifer Show in Guthrie, Okla. My favorite part was seeing friends from across the country. It is always hard to say goodbye for an entire year, but this year we have the Gerts Ongoing Advanced Leadership Summit in Pennsylvania July 21-25! I can't wait to spend more time with

some of my closest friends while furthering my leadership skills. I have had an amazing year serving as your president, and look forward to continuing to help out in any way I can throughout the upcoming years.

Did you know that we as cattle producers are producing more with less? According to research conducted by the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, each pound of beef produced today uses 20 percent less feed, 30 percent less land and 14 percent less water than it did just 30 years ago. That adds up to a 16 percent decrease in our carbon footprint.

Advancements in vaccines, antibiotics and production enhancers (hormones) all contribute to this incredible decrease. While media may have shed some poor light on some of these things, the data behind it shows the truth. When we look at 3-ounce servings of multiple foods, we are able to see what little estrogen there is in implanted beef compared to everyday meal items. While there are only 1.9 nanograms of estrogen in implanted beef, there are 225 nanograms in potatoes and 11,250 in soy milk, according to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Newsroom. As producers, we are in the cattle industry to provide consumers with a product they can feel good about feeding their family.

SANTA GERTRUDIS WELCOMES *New Members*

Active Members

Cross Triangle Ranch, Dana Clark, Sperry, Okla.
Larry Dale, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Faust Ranches, James Faust, League City, Texas
Hollman Farms, Lucedale, Miss.
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Antonia Trujillo, Burleson, Texas

I hope everyone is having a great summer and takes time to share with their friends and family the importance of cattle producers and beef production. Our values for producing a healthy, wholesome product are shared industry-wide. 🌱

REGISTRATIONS, STAR 5 RECORDINGS & TRANSFERS BY DISTRICT

MAY 2015

District	Purebred Reg.	Star 5 Reg.	Performance Only	Purebred & Star 5 Trans.
1	32	9	2	113
2	123	10	0	115
3	27	0	3	31
4	23	3	2	34
5	25	11	0	58
6	27	18	0	22

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SANTA GERTRUDIS *Calendar*

JULY

17-18 Kentucky Show & Sale, Bowling Green, Ky.
21-25 GOALS Junior Retreat, Gettysburg, Pa.

AUGUST

3-5 Texas A&M Beef Cattle Shortcourse, College Station, Texas
4 Ohio State Fair Open Santa Gertrudis Show, Columbus, Ohio
12 Indiana State Fair Open Santa Gertrudis Show, Indianapolis, Ind.
15 Mid Coast Cattlemen's Opportunity Sale, Brenham, Texas
29 Distinctive Dams & Daughters Sale, Corazon Pitchford Sale Facility, Athens, Texas
30 Kentucky State Fair Open Santa Gertrudis Show, Louisville, Ky.

SEPTEMBER

6 Delta Fair Santa Gertrudis Show, Memphis, Tenn.
18-19 District 6 Show Junior Show & Sale, Richmond, Ind.

OCTOBER

10 Alabama Connection Sale, Cullman, Ala.

NOVEMBER

7 South Texas Heritage Sale, Robstown, Texas
13 12th Annual Briggs Ranches Registered Santa Gertrudis Bull Sale & Commercial Replacement Female Sale, Bloomington, Texas
14 38th Annual Tri-Star Registered Santa Gertrudis Female Sale, held at Briggs Ranches, Bloomington, Texas



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For More Information Contact:

Debbie Townsend

979-541-4989

townsendcattle81@gmail.com

or any Mid Coast Board Member



Map of

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TEXAS**

WWW.MIDCOASTSANTAGERTRUDIS.COM

SANTA GERTRUDIS *Production* BASIC MATING STRATEGIES

By Randy L. Stanko, Ph.D., Texas A&M University-Kingsville



Let me begin this month's article with the full disclosure that I am not trained as a livestock geneticist or animal breeder, but I have made breeding decisions for hundreds of cows. Mating strategies are typically developed to either improve genetically superior traits in a purebred herd or to create hybrid vigor (*heterosis*) in a commercial crossbred herd. Improvement of a beef herd can be accomplished by utilizing trait selection

and applying basic mating strategies.

Mating strategies can be based on individual animal performance or the genetic relationship of the animals being mated. Thus, beef cattle raisers can choose a particular bull (or semen from a particular bull) to breed to a specific cow to produce a specific type of calf. This can be accomplished in two types of mating strategies: 1) assortative (either positive or negative) or 2) random. Assortative mating is when you pair similar bulls and cows (positive) or you pair dissimilar bulls and cows (negative). This type of mating strategy depends on reasonable use of objective beef cattle performance records. For example, you could mate bulls with high weaning weights to cows with high weaning weights. This approach usually results in rapid genetic progress and produces calves with extreme performance in a single trait or several traits. However, assortative positive mating will also increase the variability observed in a particular trait expressed in the calves. If breeders choose to mate a low birth weight bull to a high birth weight cow, this would be called negative assortative mating. The calf produced from this mating strategy would be intermediate in birth weight, as compared to the parents. This strategy is slower in making progress than positive assortative mating, but produces less genetic variation, or more uniformity, in the offspring.

The remaining mating strategy option is random mating, and it is very effective in purebred herds that have been highly selected over several years. Random mating is also used by most commercial cattlemen, as they typically do not collect detailed cow performance records. Most commercial cattle producers spend more time making selection decisions about the sire than the dam. When using the random mating strategy, you must be willing to accept the random nature of genetics.

The two major mating strategies based on genetic relationship are inbreeding and outbreeding. Inbreeding is the mating of animals that are more closely related than the

average of the breed or total population. There are two types of inbreeding: intensive breeding and line breeding. Intensive is the mating of closely related cattle for several generations, whereas line breeding is lower in inbreeding, but still maintains a high genetic relationship to an ancestor or line of ancestors. On the other hand, outbreeding involves the mating of cattle that are less closely related than the average of the breed or total population. Below are the definitions of the five different forms of outbreeding:

OUTCROSSING: Mating of unrelated cattle within a breed.

GRADING UP: Mating purebred bulls to grade females of the same breed and their heifer calves, generation after generation.

LINE CROSSING: Mating of distinct lines of cattle of the same breed that may or may not be inbred.

CROSSBREEDING: Mating of cattle from two different established breeds (16 percent heterosis) or using two breeds and mating with F1 sires (22 percent heterosis).

SPECIES CROSS: mating of animals of different species (bovine x bison).

The genetic relationship between cattle is based upon whether the genes exist in a heterozygous or homozygous state. Species crossing would maximize the heterozygous genetic condition and mating full siblings or sire to daughter would maximize the homozygous genetic condition. Therefore, inbreeding of cattle would be used to increase the homozygosity of the genes for the purpose of increasing uniformity. Inbreeding works great for traits that are controlled by a few genes, like coat color or horned/polled. For traits controlled by several genes – most of the economically important traits – uniform cattle will be the result of very high levels of inbreeding. Finally, inbreeding is a very powerful mating strategy to identify individuals that carry genetic defects. 🐄



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WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE?

The following article is the first in a series reviewing the tools available to better identify genetics that positively impact profitability. In the past 2-year period, SGBI has taken steps to strengthen the breed's genetic evaluation, providing dependable genetic predictions in an easy-to-use package. The SGBI genetic evaluation is recognized as one of the most comprehensive among the Bos indicus-influenced breeds.

Photo by Dixie Clay Ridge Point Ranch, Madison, Miss.



By John Ford, SGBI Executive Director

The development of statistical methodologies and the progression of computer hardware capable of sorting and analyzing massive amounts of data in a short period of time opened the door for statisticians, geneticists and animal scientists to estimate, with a high degree of confidence, breeding values of cattle. These complex, data-driven breeding value computations are known as expected progeny differences (EPDs). *EPDs represent the genetic component of an animal's phenotype that is expected to be passed on to the next generation.* Let me stress that EPDs represent the *genetic component* of an animal's phenotype. Why is this important to cattle breeders? Because not all of an animal's phenotypic superiority or inferiority for a trait is caused by genetics; part is due to environmental conditions. For example, weaning weight is not only dependent upon genetic potential for growth, but also the environment the animal experienced, including access to nutrition, season born, geographic location and numerous other non-genetic factors. If selection is based solely on non-genetic factors, then a degree of guesswork remains in the selection and decision-making process. *EPDs are the most meaningful indicator of an animal's true genetic merit, resulting in less selection guesswork.*

EPDs are simple to understand and easy to use if one key word is kept in mind: *difference*. Comparing EPD values of Santa Gertrudis cattle allows the user to easily see differences in animal performance. EPDs are reported as a plus (+) or minus (-) value in units consistent with traits measured. Traits such as birth weight, weaning weight and yearling weight are expressed in pounds. For example, a bull with

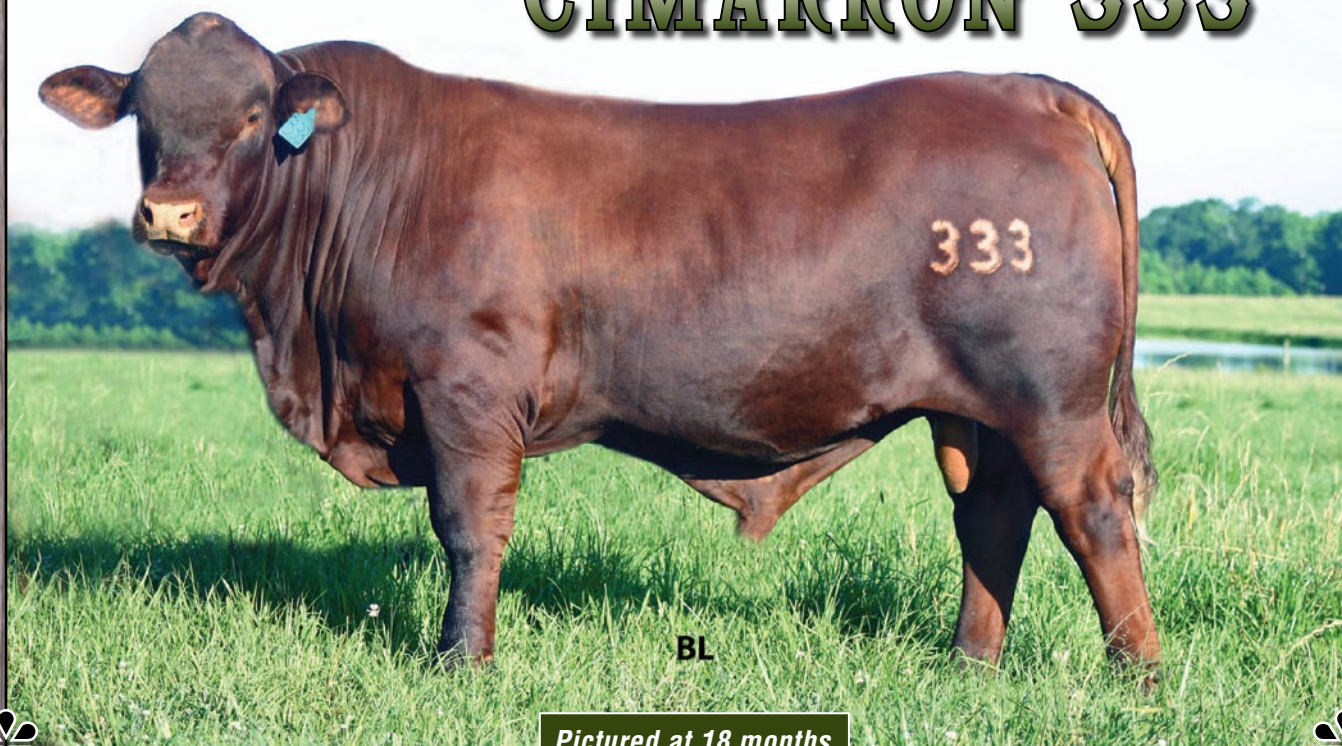
a weaning weight EPD of +20 would produce progeny that should average 20 more pounds at 205 days of age than the progeny of a bull with a weaning weight EPD of 0.00. Ribeye area EPDs are expressed in square inches – again, a unit consistent with the trait being measured. Calves sired by a bull with a ribeye area EPD of +.25 should have a ribeye area .25 square inches larger than that of calves sired by a bull with a ribeye area EPD of 0.00. Easy enough; but how are these differences in genetic merit established?

It is not a simple process; as stated earlier, EPDs are calculated using complex statistical equations and models. These statistical models use all known information on a particular animal to calculate its EPDs. This information includes performance data on the animal itself, information from its ancestors (sire and dam, grandsire, great-grandsire, maternal grandsire, etc.), relatives (brothers and sisters) and progeny (including progeny that are parents themselves). All performance data and information that relate to the animal of interest is used. To ensure comparisons are equal, performance records are adjusted for factors such as sex and age of the animal, and age of the dam. Additionally, genetic merit of mates is accounted for in evaluating progeny information. Common sires create genetic links between herds with differing environments and serve as the foundation for evaluation of performance data and EPD calculation across herds. The inclusion of the genetic relationships that exist between various traits is factored into the calculation as well. Finally, each EPD is presented with a corresponding accuracy value, which measures the strength of the relationship between the genetic prediction and true genetic value. Accuracies are reported as a decimal between 0 and 1. As the accuracy value approaches 1.0, the reported EPD is more likely to represent the true genetic merit of the animal and is less likely to change as more progeny records are calculated into the animal's EPD. On the other hand, low accuracy values (closer to 0) indicate that the reported EPD is less reliable. Accuracy is primarily a result of the amount of information available to calculate an EPD for any given trait.

Advances in the arena of genomics, including the mapping of the bovine genome, added another source of information for EPD calculations. Genomic-enhanced (GE) EPDs combine an analysis of pedigree, individual performance and genomic information to hasten the rate of genetic progress in a population of cattle. DNA-verified or GE EPDs increase the accuracy on younger, non-parent animals. The increase in EPD accuracies allows breeders to identify the best genetics earlier in an animal's life. Information gleaned from a single DNA sample may provide as much information as the entire first calf crop of a bull or the lifetime production record of a cow. As Santa Gertrudis breeders add to the association's genomic

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17 »

CIMARRON 333



Pictured at 18 months

DOUBLE POLLED : DOUBLE BRED GRIZZLY

MODERATE FRAME

BW: 72 lb.

WW: 680 lb.

YW: 1060 lb.

GAIN DATA

ADG: 4.22

WDA: 3.51

365-day Scrotal: 34.5

SCAN DATA

REA: 12.10

REA/CWT: 1.14

IMF: 3.41

BSE @ 365 DAYS

Concentration: Very Good

Motility: Very Good

Normal Cells: 85%

GENOMIC MERIT SCORE

Growth: ★★★★★

Maternal: ★★★★★

Carcass: ★★★★★

BW	WW	YW	Milk	TM	HWC	IMF
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Maximizing Your Scanning Investment

By Mark Henry, The CUP Lab™, LLC

Why has the beef industry adopted carcass ultrasound at a higher rate than any other segment of the livestock industry? Because it works!

Around 2005, after more than a decade of scanning, many folks were starting to wonder about the lack of improvement in carcass quality. More specifically, why were we not seeing an increase in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Quality Grades in the packing house coolers. Had our efforts been in vain? Perhaps we were just wasting time and money with ultrasound and we needed to seek a new way to improve beef carcasses.

Then, in 2007, we began to see things change, with a slight uptick in the percentage of cattle grading USDA Choice and Prime for the first time in years. According to USDA, 2006 saw just over half of cattle hitting Choice or better. Since then, we have seen steady and continual improvements, with more than 62 percent of graded carcasses falling into Choice and Prime for 2009. In 2014, that percentage had grown to more than 69 percent. Most recently, the first eight weeks of 2015 has more than 73 percent of carcasses Choice or better. Who knows how much higher we will go?

While it is certain that many factors led to this dramatic change in carcass quality, I believe firmly that the adoption of Centralized Ultrasound Processing (CUP), and the development of ultrasound and carcass expected progeny differences (EPDs) has been the major driver in the shift to improved carcass quality.



I believe firmly that it isn't a coincidence that carcass quality began to improve roughly one generation interval after the adoption of CUP and ultrasound EPDs.

– Mark Henry

In 1997, the American Angus Association funded a trial at Iowa State University to investigate whether ultrasound data from seedstock could be used to predict performance of their offspring. Two years later the answer came back as a resounding YES! Ultrasound EPDs were effective, and a new system for reading ultrasound images was born.

CUP was a new idea and it took some getting used to. Researchers put in place strict standards and protocols to ensure data integrity. Field technicians, who were used to interpreting their own images, had to be trained to collect images of sufficient quality and consistency to be interpreted by laboratory technicians. Then, lab technicians generated intra-muscular fat (IMF), ribeye area and fat thickness interpretations to be sent to breed associations. When all the parts were put in place, an unbiased third-party collection and interpretation system was also put into place.

I believe firmly that it isn't a coincidence that carcass quality began to improve roughly one generation interval after the adoption of CUP and ultrasound EPDs. Images processed in

one location with well-proven software increased the consistency and accuracy of scan data. EPDs allowed breeders to select for the carcass traits they wanted with much more accuracy. As one breeder put it to me years ago, "EPDs aren't perfect, but they work. You get what you select for."

It is implied in the title of this article that I would tell you how to maximize your ultrasound investment, so here goes:

- Scanning large contemporary groups is far more powerful than scanning a bunch of small ones, so do everything you can to create and maintain large contemporary groups through scanning.

- Scan every animal. Animals on the low end make the high-end cattle look even better.

- Feed your cattle well enough to allow them to express their genetic potential for marbling, ribeye area and fat.

- Scan your heifers. They are your future, so select the best. You also get a boost in EPD accuracy for their calves when they are scanned in the future.

- Have your cattle scanned by an Ultrasound Guidelines Council (UGC) certified technician. They have gone through extensive training and testing to gain certification status.

- Submit your images to The CUP Lab™. We have proprietary IMF software that will allow for the most accurate interpretations.

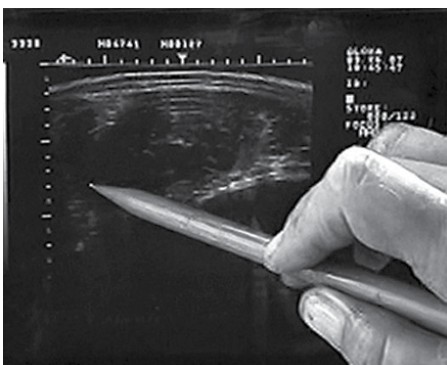
- Utilize your EPDs for selection. Raw and adjusted data simply don't hold a candle to the power of an EPD.

- Do not single trait select. While you can make fast progress by focusing on one trait, you will likely regress in several other areas.

- Educate your customers. Perhaps your management doesn't allow for you to produce the largest ribeyes or highest IMFs, but if buyers understand EPDs, they won't rely on actual or adjusted data to make their purchasing decisions.

After seeing millions of ultrasound images and having countless conversations with seedstock producers just like you, I have learned several things about the proper use of ultrasound data:

- Actual interpretation data is only valuable when making a harvesting decision. It cannot be used to compare the genetic value of one animal vs. another. Without additional information such as contemporary group, diet, weight, age, gender, geographic



location, etc., a raw ribeye area value of 16.8 square inches is meaningless to a bull buyer. If the bull was scanned at 2 years of age and weighed a ton, is that still a good number?

- Age-adjusted ultrasound data allows for some comparison between animals, but only within the same contemporary group. It can't be used to compare cattle from competing herds because, again, diet and other environmental factors have a dramatic impact on the data.

- Ratios work well when that is the best you have. Because ratios are a reflection of ranking within the contemporary group, they can only be used to compare animals within the same contemporary group.

- EPDs are the single most effective tool for comparing animals within a contemporary group, a herd or a breed. EPDs are designed to estimate the genetic potential of an animal by removing the environmental impact on their phenotype. Data from siblings, parents, grandparents and offspring all contribute to calculate a number and an associated accuracy. Even though they are not perfect, they have served us very well.

- Avoid confusing folks with ribeye area per hundred weight (REA/CWT) calculations. I will agree, it has a bit more value than a simple raw number, but not much. Younger calves tend to have higher REA/CWT due to the fact that they are in the lean part of their growth curve. REA/CWT is a huge disadvantage for bulls that are older as their muscle growth has slowed and fat deposition has increased greatly. There isn't enough information there for a buyer to make an educated purchasing decision.

At a sale years ago, I heard the auctioneer tout the IMF value of a bull that had just been scanned. Not only had he violated my cardinal rule of not using raw data, but he also reported a "steer equivalent." Ugh! I understand the idea that bulls have testosterone in much larger quantities than steers, but adding some arbitrary number to a bull's actual IMF data doesn't make any more sense than subtracting ribeye area to create a "steer equivalent" ribeye area.

Ultrasound is a tremendous tool that has advanced the beef industry greatly. While beef prices are at record highs, demand remains strong. To me, that is strong evidence that efforts to improve quality have worked very well. And we are not done yet. 🐄

WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

database through submission of hair samples, Santa Gertrudis genetic prediction accuracies will continue to improve.

EPDs are one of many tools available for breeder use; however, EPDs can't make up for management practices and environmental conditions. Calves sired by a bull with a lower weaning weight EPD can weigh heavier than those sired by a bull with a higher weaning weight EPD if offspring are exposed to more favorable management practices or environmental conditions.

EPDs and GE EPDs are the most reliable predictors of an animal's true genetic merit. SGBI's GE EPDs serve as one tool in the association's toolbox for breeder use, providing the information needed to better identify genetics that positively impact profitability. 🐄



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By Darren Richmond, Member Services Representative

TOURING KENTUCKY



On a beautiful May day, David Alderson and I set out on a two-day trip to tour some of Kentucky's finest Santa Gertrudis operations on our way to the Kentucky Santa Gertrudis Association Field Day at Stricko Ranch in Verona. With cattle prices at an all-time high and increased interest in our breed, all the producers we visited were in good spirits. Our first stop was in Leitchfield at Windcrest Farm, where John, Karen and Scott Taylor greeted us. Through the lush pastures at Windcrest Farms we walked, looked at the cow herd, inspected John's Kentucky National Sale lots and studied his herd sire Grandview 117. John also had some nice young bulls on feed that should make future bull sales easy.

Our next stop was also in Leitchfield, at the farm of Tommy Embry. A former dairyman, Embry is now putting together an outstanding set of beef cattle with a Hereford x Angus base. His plans to produce STAR 5 females and maintain a small herd of registered Santa Gertrudis females as well. He purchased bulls in last year's Alabama Connection Sale from Gray Oaks Farm, and he also bought bulls from Windcrest Farms and Lovett Farm, Hillsboro, Ohio. With the quality of his base herd and bulls he has purchased, Embry should be well ahead of the game when it comes to producing those STAR 5 females that are in such high demand. If you're ever in central Kentucky, seek out the Whistle Stop Café in Glendale;

TOP: SGBI members gathered for the annual Kentucky Santa Gertrudis Association Field Day at Stricko Ranch in Verona, Ky.

RIGHT: From left, David Alderson, Darren Richmond and John Taylor at Windcrest Farm, Leitchfield, Ky.

BELOW: From left, David Smith, Rodney Smith and David Alderson at Rebel Ridge Farm, LaGrange, Ky.



thanks to Karen Taylor for the suggestion – I had one of the best pieces of pie I ever ate!

Our next stop was the farm of Doug Estes in Elizabethtown. Estes has a beautiful farm in the rolling hills of central Kentucky. A reasonably new breeder, Estes keeps a nice, small herd on that lush Kentucky Bluegrass. He is using a bull he purchased from Lovett Farm, and he is definitely on the right track. Thanks to John Taylor for helping Estes become an SGBI member.

We continued north to Plainview Farm, Mattingly Farm and Greer Live-

stock, all located in Brandenburg, just outside of Fort Knox. Neither David nor I had seen Fort Knox, so we checked it out and we both thought it looked just like it did in the movie *Goldfinger*. We met Cody Mattingly and his grandfather and looked at their herd; Cody and his family have been very involved in the junior program and are big supporters of the SGBI point shows in Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana. We also looked at David Greer's cattle and saw his herd sire Circle A Ironman, which brought Day 1 to an end.

Day 2 began with a visit to Rebel Ridge Santa Gertrudis in La Grange, owned by the Smith Brothers, David and Rodney. Santa Gertrudis roots run deep in the Smith family, as theirs is Herd No. 123. With 40-50 females, the Smiths are doing a great job using artificial insemination (AI) and embryo transfer (ET) to improve their herd. As we walked through the pasture looking at the cowherd, we commended them for the quality and docility of their cattle. They used a Sombrero son pur-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 »

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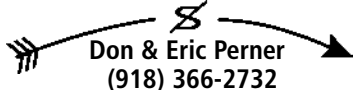
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TOURING KENTUCKY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

chased from Tinney Farms, Hanceville, Ala., and are now using LF Ten Ten, a bull purchased from Lovett Farm. When we left Rebel Ridge, we drove through northern Kentucky and traveled past some of the impressive thoroughbred farms along the way.

Our next stop was Mosby Creek Ranch in Sparta. With help from owner Larry Osborne, we found our way through the hills and hollers of northern Kentucky to his farm. Larry, one of our current SGBI board members, met us and showed us some of his new additions from the Breeders of the Carolinas Sale. We inspected his cowherd, which included 2013 National Champion Female OLC Rosie, who looks better than ever and is in the Mosby Creek Ranch and Osborne Livestock ET program. Larry and his son Todd have been big supporters of the juniors, District 6 sale and the Polled Santa Gertrudis Association for years.

After a great visit with the Osbornes, we continued on to Verona, just south of Cincinnati, Ohio, where we met with the Strickmeyers, Rob, Joe and Randy, and farm manager Jason Heath, at Stricko Ranch. We rode through the

pastures and saw a stout set of calves sired by TF Red Solo Cup, a former National Champion Best of Polled Bull. As Stricko Ranch prepared for the next day's Kentucky Association Field Day, we saw some of Randy's show prospects he was getting ready for the National Jr. Santa Gertrudis Heifer Show in Oklahoma.

Saturday morning brought a great turnout for the Kentucky Santa Gertrudis Association Field Day at the Strickmeyers'. Jason gave the welcome and we began the day with a junior showmanship demonstration by Jason and Randy, which was very helpful to the juniors in attendance. Next, Jason gave a hoof-trimming demonstration, offering the crowd tips on hoof maintenance and correction. The group then partook of an excellent potluck lunch provided by the attendees and organized by Kentucky Association mainstays, Pat and Beverly Heath. After lunch, I gave an SGBI report, detailing the recent SGBI Annual Meeting and successful sales in the Southeast, and affirming that this is a great time to be in the Santa



Gertrudis business. I also recognized present SGBI board members David Alderson, and Larry and Todd Osborne. Next, Kentucky Department of Agriculture Representative Warren Beeler spoke about what the state of Kentucky is doing to help farmers cope with new government regulations pertaining to livestock identification and other concerns. After that, farm tours were given. A big thank-you to the Strickmeyer family and the Kentucky Santa Gertrudis Association for hosting such a great event. The Kentucky breeders have been a mainstay for years and can always be counted on to participate on a regional and national level when it comes to promoting this great breed of cattle. 🐄



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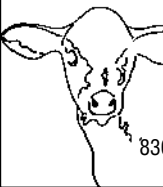
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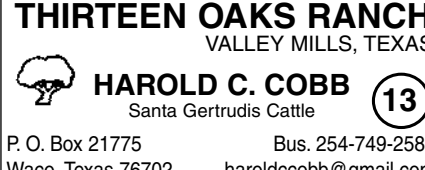

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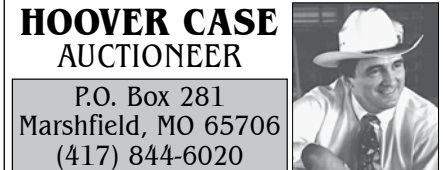
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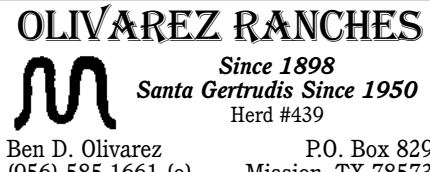
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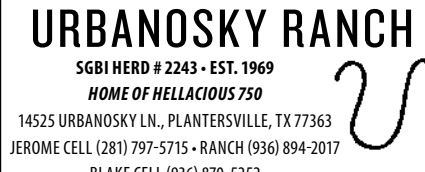
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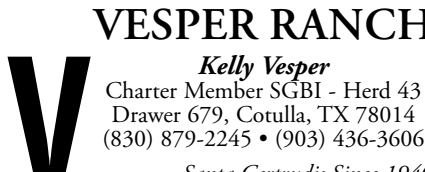
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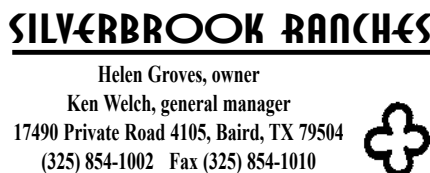
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Animal Advocacy: Articulating Your Story

By Kelsey Pope, Freelance Writer



Today's cattlemen and women take what they do very seriously, as the legacy and knowledge of raising cattle merits great pride. They are deeply rooted in their values concerning their community, the environment and raising a calf crop each year.

With the rearing of cattle comes the charge to compassionately care for that animal, account for how that animal is provided for, and positively promote what cattlemen do and why they do it.

Animal Welfare

Much of the pride cattle producers have comes from responsibility. Today more than ever, cattlemen and women take the responsibility of raising healthy cattle for high-quality, nutritious beef very genuinely. Much of that responsibility is stewardship, including following animal welfare guidelines.

The way cattle are handled is traditionally passed down from generation to generation on family operations, or comes from personal experience and training. Yet, as industry standards change, cattlemen and women also want to change to make sure they are doing the best to take care of their animals. Practices of production such as de-horning, castration, use of vaccines and antibiotics, etc., all have their purpose in the industry, but the way they are used can be skewed by the public eye.

"As Santa Gertrudis breeders, we need to be proactive when it comes to animal welfare," said Darren Richmond, SGBI member services representative. "With the government and media putting more emphasis on this topic, it is important that we use this opportunity to show the consumer that we are truly concerned. Through herd management,

good herdsmanhood and breed association awareness, we are moving in a positive direction."

Accountability

Cattle producers must be responsible for the way they handle their cattle. One form of accountability is the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program, a national program that provides guidelines for beef cattle production. This program isn't new to the industry; cattlemen and women have been practicing stewardship and proper handling for years.

The cattle industry formalized its first quality program in the late 1970s and called it the "Beef Safety Assurance" program; this program was designed to help producers ensure production practices were safe and met consumer expectations. The BQA program, the first of its kind in the world, soon followed and was officially established in 1987.

"BQA is another way we can show the consumer we want to produce a high-quality product, and that we're proud of using management, genetic tools and the USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture] identification program to improve our product," said Richmond.

BQA raises consumer confidence through offering proper management techniques and a commitment to quality within every segment of the beef industry. It is an educating program that has evolved to include best practices around good record keeping and protecting herd health.

Advocacy

Along with programs like BQA, cattle producers are encouraged to practice advocacy techniques while they're in the public eye. Unfortunately, those who don't understand agriculture have misguided ideas and sometimes share erroneous information, pictures and videos about the treatment of food animals.

In our country, rural communities have declined and consumers are generally two or more generations removed from production agriculture. Without those ties, consumers don't know about modern food production. Until a video or picture comes across their Facebook news feed that presents food production as a social dilemma, some may not care.

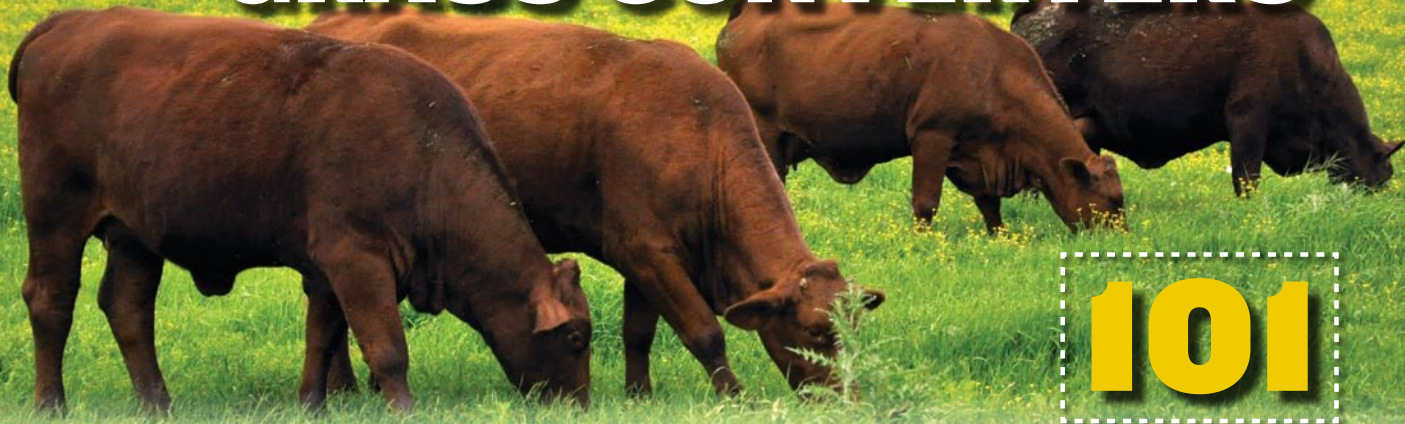
Social media has drastically changed how agriculture is viewed and how people think about their food. While it has brought some negative views and questions to livestock production, the two-way street allows producers to have a voice as well as a listening audience that is focused on where they intersect and can relate with one another.

When consumers are concerned about how their food is raised, it gives producers an opportunity to talk about animal welfare and is a good wake-up call to all livestock producers



CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 »

GRASS CONVERTERS



By Lisa Bard, *Santa Gertrudis USA* Editor

As cattle producers, you all know that without grass or forage of some kind, you really have nothing for your livestock to survive on. Grass sustains cattle; cattle are your lifeblood. Grass equals cattle. Seems pretty simple. But is it?

The forage base that supports your cowherd is vital to your staying in business, but managing forage can be a complicated, intensive job. The flipside is that, if done correctly and in partnership with your cattle and your environment, the rewards can be huge. Following is a synopsis of some items to consider as you make a forage management plan – or just learn more about how you can improve the efficiency of your grass converters, and improve your forage resource and bottom line.

Manage your forage resource

There is a wealth of information available to producers on the topics of grazing management and grazing systems – on the internet, from your local or state cattlemen's association, from land grant universities and from organizations such as the Noble Foundation (noble.org), the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (MARC) and others. Countless articles, books and presentations are written or given each year on these topics and how to get your cattle to convert your forage to beef. The bottom line is there is no single, absolutely right way to manage your forage resource. It depends on where you are located, what your goals are, what kind of cattle you have, what your rainfall and soil type is, how much land you have, what your labor resource is and so on. The point is to learn enough about your environment and what your inputs and goals are, in order to develop a grazing management plan. Once your plan is developed, implement it and stick to it, even while you adapt and modify it as needed. The more you manage your grass via your cattle, the less you will have to do to maintain the resource or use mechanical means to manage it.

Matching cattle to the environment

Many years ago, matching cattle to the environment was a topic of much discussion and focus in the industry. As the industry looks more at conservation, sustainability and enterprise profitability, the topic is more relevant than ever.

Just what does it mean to match cattle to the environment? Basically, you have to consider if the cattle you have can produce beef in the environment you have, not the other

way around. Are your cattle the right size? Too large a cow can't stay in good condition and reproduce in many regions – biological type is far more important than body size. Are your cattle the right genetic package? Hot, humid and highly insect-infested regions need the right kind of cattle to thrive there, as do dry, hot and arid regions. Are your cattle the right kind of foragers? If your operation is extensively managed with a lot of varied forage, your cattle need to be able to travel far and wide to get enough to eat and drink. On the other hand, if your system is one of high-intensity, short duration grazing, then you might want cattle that are quite docile and can move through your system easily.

Profitable cattle are usually quite productive, but productive cattle are not always profitable, so it is important to choose, breed, select and produce the type of animal that fits your environment. Always assess your environment first – knowing that you cannot and should not change that very easily – and then put the cattle on it that match what the environment is giving you.

Forage sources

It is also essential that you know what your forage base is and what it is providing nutritionally for your cattle. There is no single answer to this question as there is such a wide range in forage from region to region, and in many cases, even pasture to pasture. What your pastures may be lacking in nutrition for your cattle, particularly during critical production times such as calving, breeding or heifer development, is just as important as what it is providing. Many pastures may just need supplemental minerals, while others may need reseeding, weed management or rotational grazing to improve their value to your herd.

In many regions, invasive weeds, shrubs, trees and even grasses can reduce the productivity and health of your rangeland. Control of these invasive plants can increase productivity greatly, but usually comes at a cost. Techniques to control invasive plants vary from mechanical means to chemical means to varied grazing systems to grazing by complementary species. All factors need to be considered when planning your management of invasive plants.

Many local extension offices can assist with a pasture/forage analysis, as can pasture management companies or professional forage/range management consultants. Once you

Photo by Betty McCormick, Woman's Hollerin Ranch, Brookshire, Texas

know what you have, you can then assess how to improve your pastures to provide what your cattle need to thrive.

Soil type and health

Soil type and health is just as important as forage type and health, and is even increasing in importance as our land is more stressed and pushed to higher levels of production. Without healthy soils, the plants can't be healthy, and therefore the cattle will suffer.

Burke Teichert, a consultant on strategic planning for ranches and the retired vice president and general manager of Deseret Ranches, as well as a contributing writer for *Beef Magazine*, writes (in a blog post for *Beef Magazine* in June of 2014) that soil health comes first, the grass second and finally the livestock.



"Beef producers need to change the paradigm in ranching from livestock-grass-soil, to soil-grass-livestock," Teichert writes. "We should think soil first, as all life springs from the soil. Our livestock can be a powerful tool to improve or damage the soil, and too many of us don't think about which we are doing." Livestock can and should be used to improve soil organic

matter, increase water infiltration rates, improve soil moisture holding capacity and improve nutrient cycling – all of which in turn improves forage productivity.

According to Teichert, as soils improve there will be an increase in biodiversity above and below the soil surface. Different plants will have different root depths and will grow at different times of the year and under different environmental conditions. Above ground, there will be a greater variety of animal life of all kinds, while below ground there will be a greater variety of soil micro-organisms. "This complex web of interdependency, if properly managed, will continue to improve the soil and its ability to feed your livestock," Teichert says.

In this blog, he also gives some very sage advice in regard to herbicides and pesticides. "While I want herbicides and pesticides in my tool box, I want to use them as sparingly as possible, as no poison kills only the target organism. Sometimes the net effect is good, but we often fail to see the unintended consequences because they aren't quite so obvious to the impatient, untrained eye," writes Teichert. "I often wonder, when using pesticides and herbicides, what have we killed that is important to soil building and nutrient cycling or to a balance in predator-prey relationships. My preference is to manage as much as possible for what you do want instead of against what you don't want. And I want healthy soils with much biodiversity above and below the soil surface."

Other considerations

There are many more factors to consider when managing your grass converters, and this is only a start. Additional considerations will be addressed in Part II of Grass Converters 101 in the next issue of *Santa Gertrudis USA*. 🐾

ANIMAL ADVOCACY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

that others are watching. This is especially true at livestock shows. There is a critical eye watching every move and exhibitors need to be ready to share their story with emphasis on why and how.

Articulate Your Story

Are you prepared to answer critical questions about production practices that come naturally to you? Why do you use clippers on your animal? What are you feeding them? Where do you keep your animals? These questions might be something you've never thought about. Our industry needs to take time to stand in our consumers' shoes and have a good working knowledge of the industry, as well as use terminology that most people will understand.

It's especially good to be proactive. Help consumers connect the dots by reaching out to them and asking if they have any questions. SGBI is hoping its members will learn more about animal welfare and is providing more learning opportunities.

"As a breed association, SGBI is making its members aware of animal welfare issues by discussing it at our recent meetings," said Richmond. "As we exhibit our cattle, we need to show the public that we are truly good herdsman and that our cattle are treated with respect and given the best treatment possible." 🐾

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