

RAAA National Office

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Association Commentary

by Bob Hough, RAAA Executive Secretary

A.I. - The Industry's Most Powerful Biotechnology

As a beef industry we are always looking for the next silver bullet. Gene markers, cloning, new EPDs and indexes are just a few examples. However, the most powerful tool a breeder has is artificial insemination. AI allows a breeder to utilize the best bulls in the industry; literally leveling the playing field for breeders regardless of their size and location. Much of the guess work is removed from breeding cattle, especially when a producer makes the decision to utilize high accuracy sires.

AI is one of the older technologies, with unrestricted AI being accepted from the inception of the RAAA in 1954. What has changed is the development of numerous estrous synchronization methods that make AI far more successful and less labor intensive. A great overview of these different synchronization methodologies can be found on pages 90 and 91. By implementing one of these systems, on cattle in good body condition, conception rates can be high and calving seasons can be tight.

For small commercial breeders, AI is often the most logical way to implement a crossbreeding system. Sophisticated crossbreeding systems can be taken on with AI that would only be possible for very large breeders when natural service sires are used. An all-purpose Red Angus bull can then be used as a clean up sire to assure that your whole calf crop has maximum value and retention possibilities on the heifers.

AI is such a powerful tool, but too few producers take advantage of its possibilities. My challenge to every

Red Angus purebred breeder is to fully implement an AI program this spring. For commercial producers, you too should take a look and see if it fits into your management and breeding program.

Bull Buying

We are now in the heart of the bull marketing season. Commercial producers are in the throes of deciding on their seedstock purchases; decisions which will impact their herds for years. At Red Angus, our whole purpose is to satisfy the needs of commercial customers who purchase our members' bulls. This is why we have the best objectively described cattle in the industry, and provide the best service after the sale with our Commercial Marketing Program. Of course, the Association is just a reflection of the people that breed Red Angus cattle.

On the whole, Red Angus breeders are the most grounded in the industry. They know the ultimate purpose of seedstock is to provide genetics to the commercial industry. Red Angus breeders do not play games trading dollars with each other, but have an economy with a foundation in the real beef industry. Your concerns as commercial producers are our concerns. We are in this together.

Because we know your purchase of Red Angus genetics represent a trust in our breeders and our system, I would like to thank you in advance. Your money is hard earned, which is precisely why we think more producers are moving to Red Angus, and the predictability and consistency that they bring to a breeding program. ■