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The Model of Efficient Production

by Clint Berry, RAAA Communications/Member Services Director

The Red Angus female is truly the model of efficient beef production.

While there are other breeds that make functional momma cows, no other breed can legitimately claim to be superior to the Red Angus influenced female when a producer includes all the demands required for profitable production. Facing the ever increasing costs of inputs such as land value, fuel, corn and hay, the advantages of utilizing Red Angus genetics has never been clearer. Cattlemen are in a tough business; beef production has never been for the faint of heart, but in today's ultra competitive market this has become even more obvious. The most successful producers recognize this situation as a challenge, but also as an emerging opportunity. As Red Angus breeders, we're poised in an enviable position in the seedstock business. We are producing the genetics that have the ability to excel in this type of challenging environment. Simply put, Red Angus provides commercial cattlemen with the genetics required for their continued success.

Red Angus females have the ability to adapt and excel in all environments. They are truly the "no holes" breed of cattle. Their docile temperament and red hide color are true convenience traits that are sometimes overlooked and taken for granted, until the absence of those traits becomes apparent. A long tradition of promoting crossbreeding by our Association and its breeders is paying huge dividends for commercial cattlemen realizing the benefits of using Red Angus as the cornerstone in their programs. Crossing Red Angus to any other breed is the easy step to increasing the efficiency, longevity and fertility of the progeny. Perhaps one of the most underrated advantages that Red Angus can provide is the distinct ability to unify a crossbred calf crop. The calves from the resulting cross will express a more consistent coat color and body structure improving their marketability.

The ability to reduce the costs of production through the use of more efficient females is the hottest topic of discussion in our industry. Red Angus was the first breed to publish a Maintenance Energy (ME) EPD; it is the industry's first look at the production side cost of the profit equa-

tion. The development and utilization of this EPD by the breeders is a continuation of the long standing policy of the Red Angus Association to base our EPDs on Economically Relevant Traits (ERT's). Basing EPD production on the philosophy of ERT's, allows Red Angus to concentrate on providing genetic selection tools that directly affect our commercial customer's profitability.

Red Angus females have established a tradition of demanding premiums in the market place, but even with the higher prices paid, the return on investment is easy to realize. The compounding effects of increased longevity and fertility expressed by Red Angus influenced females in a planned cross breeding program are undeniable. An increase in fertility that allows a female to breed on the first heat cycle vs. the second heat cycle translates to a minimum of +40 lbs. of weaned calf (21 days x 2 lbs. /day = + 40 lbs.). The added longevity in a cow's production lifetime equals not only more calves weaned, but also the savings associated with the development/purchase cost of additional replacement females. With fewer replacements required, additional revenue can also be generated from marketing more heifer calves vs. retaining them as replacements. Perhaps the greatest return on investment comes from lowering the maintenance requirements of the cowherd, along with the requirements of the replacement heifers being added to the program. The second factor of lowering the ME requirements is the ability to run more head of lower ME cattle on the same resources; returning additional profit on the added pounds of calves sold.

Red Angus' ability to adapt and excel in our industry's varying production environments and to increase a commercial cattlemen's profitability through added production and lower production costs distinguishes our breed. The use of Red Angus is at an all time high and we're only beginning to realize the impact we have on the beef industry. Rest assured that Red Angus genetics will continue to impress producers, and the Red Angus female will remain as the model of efficient production. ■