

# Ultrasound - Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions are frequently asked by breeders in regard to RAAA Ultrasound policies and procedures. If you should have any additional questions, please contact the National Office at 940-387-3502.

## What are the benefits of using ultrasound in my herd?

- Improves accuracy of carcass EPDs.
- Allows breeder to estimate carcass measurements from breeding stock.
- Offers a means of determining carcass merit without harvest.

## Is the ultrasound program mandatory for THR?

- No, it is strictly a voluntary program.

## Do I have to be a member to use ultrasound?

- No, but the ultrasound must be performed on a registered Red Angus.

## What traits are measured?

- Rump fat, Rib fat, Ribeye area and Intramuscular fat.

## At what age should an animal be scanned?

- Bulls: between 320-440 days of age (yearlings) at or near the end of their gain test.
- Heifers: between 320-460 days of age (yearlings) just prior to breeding.

## How should I manage animals that are to be scanned?

- Bulls: should be placed on a high energy ration after weaning.
- Heifers: use normal heifer development program, using a moderate to high energy ration.

## How are the cattle grouped?

- Contemporary groups are formed from the latest information recorded (weaning or yearling) and:
  1. Three day scan - animals that are scanned more than three days apart will be grouped separately.
  2. Appropriate age - bulls outside the range of 320-440 days of age and heifers outside the range of 320-460 days of age will be placed in their own contemporary groups.
  3. Group code - if animals are indicated as managed/fed differently, they will be contemporaried separately.

## How do I get my herd scanned?

- Barnsheets with yearling animals are available via the web site under REDS or from the office upon request. Animals not listed should be requested from the office by registration number. A barnsheet containing only the additional animals will then be faxed, mailed, or e-mailed to the breeder.
- Schedule an appointment with the technician approximately one month in advance.
- Barnsheets are to be given to the technician on day of scanning.

## Who should scan?

- A list of technicians/apprentices is available from the Red Angus web site.

## How can I be sure that the measurements I receive are accurate?

- RAAA policy only allows scanning and interpreting to be performed by personnel approved by the Centralized Ultrasound Processing (CUP) laboratory in Ames, IA.
- CUP technicians are required to attend and pass a four day annual training and qualification program.
- Technicians are required to begin as an apprentice technician and remain under that title until a minimum of three hundred head are scanned across three breeder locations.
- Once the technician sends the scanned images to the CUP lab they are extensively **interpreted** and cross-checked.

## How long after the technician scans can I expect to receive data back?

- After the herd is scanned, the technician overnights images to the CUP lab.
- Images are then interpreted and sent electronically to the RAAA office.
- A summary report is then mailed to the breeder or can be found on the Red Angus web site under REDS. RAAA will send summary reports to other parties based on instructions received from the lab and the technician.
- The approximate turnaround time is seven days once the CUP lab receives the images.
- Data received from the lab by 3 p.m. will be processed the same day. Any data received after 3 p.m. will be processed the next morning.

## Why were some of my images rejected?

- Images are usually rejected if they are not an adequate measure of a trait.
- Technical problems may have incurred.
- To reduce rejected images here are a few guidelines, see the table below.

### TROUBLE SHOOTING GUIDE FOR REJECTED IMAGES

Problem	Responsibility	
	Breeder	Technician
Squeeze chute	*	
Electrical supply	*	
Clipped cattle	*	
Weight collected	*	
Age range	*	
Supplemental heat	*	

Equipment calibration	*
Gain & Focus settings	*
Reference points	*
Poor contact	*
Correct # of images	*

**Does the weight that is recorded on the day my herd is scanned recorded as the yearling weight in the RAAA office?**

- No, yearling updates need to be submitted to the RAAA office separate from the ultrasound information.

**How should I use the information I receive back?**

- The information should be used as a tool to compare animals within a contemporary group and to enhance the accuracies of carcass EPDs.