

EPD Blanking Initiative
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In order to gather more data on lowly reported traits at RAAA, the Breed Improvement Committee decided to put the EPD Blanking Initiative into effect on Jan. 1, 2024.

The initiative stated to blank EPDs on animals in the 2023 calf crop as well as future calf crops (2024, 2025, etc.) for growth traits with an accuracy less than 0.15, intake less than 0.05 accuracy, carcass traits less than 0.05 accuracy, calving ease traits less than 0.05 accuracy and maternal traits less than 0.01, unless the animal has genomically-enhanced EPDs.

These traits were grouped as follows:

- Growth Traits - Birth Weight, Weaning Weight, Yearling Weight, Average Daily Gain
- Intake - Dry Matter Intake
- Carcass Traits - Back Fat, Carcass Weight, Ribeye Area, Marbling, Retail Cuts
- Calving Ease Traits - Calving Ease Direct, Calving Ease Maternal
- Maternal Traits –Milk

Traits such as metabolic energy, heifer pregnancy, and stayability have been left as un-blanked for all animals in the database. Due to the groups shown above, the EPDs will be blanked for the group, unless all accuracy values for those traits are above the stated accuracy. This was put into place in order to get to some of the traits that are not reported as often as others. For instance, for growth traits, birth weight and weaning weight are usually reported, especially due to Total Herd Reporting. However, yearling weight is not reported to the same extent. Thus, in order to display the EPDs for birth weight and weaning weight, yearling weight and average daily gain will also need to have an accuracy above 0.15. This can be done by reporting the trait for the given animal in the database. However, in order to help those producers who may not have the ability or ease of collecting some traits, the committee decided to un-blank all EPDs if an animal was genotyped. This includes traits such as heifer pregnancy, metabolic energy and even dry matter intake that do not currently have genomics incorporated into their EPDs.

Additional Displays Blanked

Due to EPDs being blanked, the indexes that contain a blanked EPD will also be blanked. For example, as carcass traits are involved in the Grid Master Index, if carcass traits are blanked on the given animal, the Grid Master Index as well as the ProS Index will be blanked. Additionally, when first registering calves in the REDSPro System, all animals will receive parent average EPDs, until they run through the IGS Genetic Evaluation and receive updated EPDs to then be blanked. Furthermore, RAAA has tools available that utilize parent EPDs to showcase potential mating outcomes for a given calf crop. Thus, the progeny calculator will also show blanked EPDs, if the given parent animal has EPDs that are blanked. Also, given EPDs are displayed in show programs throughout the year, these animals will also still have blanked EPDs within these programs.