

LASATER BEEFMASTERS

"The Pedigree
is in the Name"

FOUNDATION HERD OF THE BEEFMASTER BREED

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The 6 Essentials

DISPOSITION
FERTILITY
WEIGHT
CONFORMATION
HARDINESS
MILK PRODUCTION

Winter 2009
NEWSLETTER

We select cattle to work for us, so we know they will work for you.

Bulls Available Private Treaty

**Females, Embryos, and Semen
Also Available**



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EXPECTED PROGENY DIFFERENCES

Part 1 - Balance is the Key

Last year for the first time, we printed the EPDs (Expected Progeny Differences) of all our sale bulls in our annual sale catalog. We will continue to do so in future sale catalogs, along with actual and adjusted weights, ultrasound measurements, scrotal circumference, ratios for every trait, dam's age, and more. EPDs are useful genetic predictions. How you choose to use the information is what's important.

When defining genetic progress, Tom Lasater said it best with, "Good genetics mean good economics." The beef cattle industry and many seedstock producers haven't always followed this motto. Fads and cattle shows often dictate breeding decisions, instead of the needs of the commercial beef industry.

Until fairly recently, EPDs have focused on growth traits. As a result, seedstock producers of every beef breed have pushed hard for growth genetics. The higher the EPDs, the better, right? Chasing growth, without regard to other equally important traits, has no genetic merit whatsoever. Remember, profit equals revenue minus expenses.

What is the cost of high growth cattle? Obviously, there is a cost of production. The push for high growth in the beef cattle industry has coincided with larger mature size. Larger cows have higher maintenance requirements. What's not so obvious is that, in the extreme, high growth genetics can also have a negative impact on fertility and milking ability. Experts believe that reproductive traits have four to ten

times the economic impact of carcass traits.

And yes, milking ability is often impacted by the most extreme cases of high growth selection. When you think about it, it makes sense; heifers out of high growth sires are more concerned about eating groceries to keep growing than they are about raising big calves.

The same can be said anytime a single trait is "singled" out. For example, selecting for marbling without regard to feed efficiency has no genetic merit. Any feedlot owner will tell you, there's much more profit in feed efficiency and there is in carcass traits.



EPDs are useful genetic predictions. But they have often been misused and misunderstood. As tempting as it is to chase numbers, the best cattle will never be extreme in any one trait. In fact, those are exactly the animals you want to be careful of. As EPDs in the Beefmaster breed become more accurate, remember the key is balance.

EPDs are not the answer. They are a useful tool, but they don't tell the complete story.

In the real world (the commercial beef industry), cattle need to do it all. That's why our system of multi-trait selection -- the Six Essentials -- is still the ideal model for raising profitable cattle. To learn more about the Six Essentials, visit us on the web at www.LasaterRanch.com.

Part 2 of EPDs will be in our Spring Newsletter.



Raising the Bar: Keeping Profit in the Selection Program

For any selection program to be successful, it is necessary to keep the pressure on year after year, and to continue to raise the bar of expectations. Ten years ago we added a new requirement for the yearling bulls we select to stay in this herd's bull battery: their dams, which have all bred at 14-15 months and have calved near their second birthday, must also re-breed as two-year olds.

Now we have raised the bar again: the dam of a prospective keep bull must also re-breed a third time in order for her male offspring to become a potential herd sire. That means the dam of any male that has the traits necessary to be selected as a herd sire must successfully clear the four most difficult hurdles in a cow's life: she must breed for the first time at 14-15 months, calve successfully as a 2-year-old, rebreed as a first-calf heifer, and conceive again while nursing her second calf.

Why is this important? Because the big investment in any cow is made in the early years of her life before her first calf is sold. Once she has produced her first three calves, she has a reasonable shot at going on to produce 6 or 8 consecutive calves and becoming a solid

contributor to ranch profitability.

For that reason we want any bull that will be given the chance to leave his imprint on the herd to carry that genetic heritage. We have a lot of numbers to look at in selecting our yearling "keep" bulls each year: weaning weight, summer gain, yearling weight, scrotal measurement, as well as REA and IMF. This new requirement insures that we are not taking a step backward by promoting the genetics of a heifer that bred on time as a yearling, raised a great calf, or even two, but then couldn't keep up the pace.

In picking out herd bulls, it is easy to over-emphasize weight, or muscling, or IMF or scrotal size. It is easy to forget that the antagonistic traits contained in any multi-trait selection program must be in balance (nature doesn't tolerate extremes). A cow's longevity is the ultimate indicator of that balance.

The longer a cow can produce with yearly, acceptable calves, the more profit she will generate. Today more than ever, we must know that our selection practices favor those individuals that will bring the most revenue to the bottom line.

Still Being Quoted

Tom Lasater is quoted in Dave Pratt's recent ProfitPoints™ article. Dave Pratt of Ranch Management Consultants runs an excellent "Ranching For Profit" school and also gives free advice twice a month in an e-mail article he calls ProfitPoints™. His advice is always right on target.

In his recent article, which focuses on calving, he concludes with a great Tom Lasater quote: "I

think Nature is smart as hell. I help as much as I can but I try to let her do most of the work." Then he adds, "Lasater's philosophy is a key to profitable ranching."

We encourage you to sign up to receive Dave Pratt's ProfitPoints™. The web address for Ranch Management Consultants is <http://www.ranchmanagement.com/index.html>.

Lasater Beefmasters

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AI Sire

Coming from a proven 8-year-old dam, Lasater Beefmaster 4248 shares the same breed-leading capacity, phenotype, and attractive muscle pattern of his sire, Lasater 1526. He is certainly one of 1526's best sons, if not the best, and that is saying a lot. Lasater 4248 is heavily muscled, yet smooth-bodied. When we took ultrasound measurements, we were not surprised to find out that he had one of the largest Ribeye Areas, 16.9.

Semen Available.

Lasater Beefmaster 4248



<u>Brand</u>	<u>Color</u>	<u>WN</u>	<u>Wn-Yr</u>	<u>Yr</u>	<u>2 Yr</u>	<u>YR</u>	<u>S.C.</u>	<u>Sire</u>	<u>Dam</u>
4248	Red	639	311	950	1540	32		1526	6327