

Regardless of the type or size of operation, each cattle producer should make a continuously conscious effort to make their operation be all it can be. This is often achieved by striving for efficiency. There are a number of different areas of an operation in which efficiency is beneficial, but one that has a major economic impact is that of feed efficiency. As we discussed in our previous article, studies show that feed efficient cattle are more profitable than *inefficient* cattle. This information should encourage a producer to question what he/she can do to have more efficient cattle in his/her operation, and what can be done to aide in selecting for this type of cattle. This week we will begin answering these questions and present various methods available to help guide a producer in selecting feed efficient cattle for their operation.

One of the ways a producer can select for feed efficient females is to use a comprehensive genetic profile, which is available through Igenity. Though Igenity offers a variety of genetic profiles, we recommend the Igenity profile for replacement heifers. This profile measures the female's feed efficiency, along with other desirable traits such as maternal calving ease and stayability. This can serve as a great tool in helping the producer make an informed decision regarding how he will manage the females, and which, if any, should be culled.

Another selection tool that is currently becoming more developed is the relative feed efficiency EPD. This method of selection is helpful, as producers can use it when deciding what bull to use on their herd. Because this is a relatively new way to measure feed efficiency, most breeds have not yet developed their own EPD for this trait. One breed that does measure it is the Angus breed. In this breed it is known as RADG, or the EPD for Residual Gain. Due to the fact that not many feed efficient EPDs exist yet, it may be difficult to find a bull that is known to be efficient in this area. However, as with the females, an Igenity profile can be easily done on a bull to find his individual feed efficiency. Similar to the Igenity profile for replacement heifers, the basic Igenity profile measures the animal's feed efficiency, and several other traits the producer may be interested in such as maternal calving ease, and heifer pregnancy rate.

Poor feed efficiency can very quickly affect an operation in a negative way. Producers should recognize this and begin doing what they can to produce cattle that are going to be efficient in their operations. Next week we will continue this discussion and present some ways that selecting for feed efficient cattle can result in greater productivity for your operation.

Prices for feeder steers sold through the Superior Livestock Auction on Friday, December 5, 2014 are as follows: 450lb- \$346, 535lb- \$299, 660lb- \$238, and 740lb- \$232. The price for January 2015 feeder steers on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange was \$234.3 at closing on Friday, December 5, 2014.

Thanks,
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