

This week we will discuss the use of terminal sires or high yearling weight sires, and the importance of reading Expected Progeny Differences (EPD's), and how implementing these two things has the potential to increase pounds of calf produced per cow exposed.

Calves out of terminal sires such as Charolais, Limousin, and Simmental, have genetics for higher weight gains and larger weaning weights than maternal sires such as Angus and Hereford. Typically, calves of terminal sire crossbreeding programs are destined for the feedlot due to their higher average daily gains, greater feed conversion, and heavier carcass weights. Maternal sire breeding programs are best known for producing calves that are prone to have lower weight gains, and work best for creating replacements rather than feedlot calves.

If you would like to increase calf weaning weight, but do not want to use terminal sires in your herd, begin studying the EPD's of the bulls you are currently using. Though each EPD reveals important information about the sire, specific attention should be placed on the bull's weaning and yearling weight EPD's. The weaning weight EPD reflects the performance of the dam and her calf- her ability to milk, in conjunction with the calf's ability to gain weight. However, the yearling weight EPD is solely a measure of calf performance, as it reflects the calf's expected ability to grow and gain weight on its own.

Terminal sires and EPD's can be used to increase the amount of pounds of calf produced per cow exposed if properly implemented. Increasing this figure, and lowering cow cost will help you make your operation be as profitable as possible.

For help selecting a terminal sire breed to use on your herd, or if you need assistance interpreting EPD's, please contact us.