



# Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association Newsletter

## January 2004

### Dr. Darrh Bullock to Address BCIA at Mississippi Cattlemen's Association Convention

Dr. Darrh Bullock, University of Kentucky Extension Beef Specialist, will address the Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association session at the upcoming Mississippi Cattlemen's Association annual convention. Dr. Bullock has been very active in the Beef Improvement Federation and Kentucky Beef Herd Improvement Association and brings a wealth of knowledge in the area of beef cattle breeding and genetics. Dr. Bullock will talk about how to decide what traits are important in beef cattle selection and how to decipher the increasing amount of information available for making animal selection decisions. There will also be discussion on the pros and cons of linebreeding for cow-calf operations.

The Mississippi Cattlemen's Association annual convention will be held at the Clarion Hotel and Convention Center on Graymont Avenue in Jackson, MS on February 6-7, 2004. The theme for this year's convention is "Managing for Profit." The BCIA session will be held in Winsor rooms I and II from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on February 6. The BCIA annual membership meeting will be held at this session after Dr. Bullock's presentation.

### Mississippi BCIA Bull Sale Results

The Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association recently wrapped up a very successful Fall Bull Sale. The Mississippi BCIA Fall Bull Sale was held at the Hinds Community College sales facility in Raymond, Mississippi on November 13, 2003. The emphasis on quality seedstock showed in the sale results. Sale receipts on thirty-six bulls totaled \$78,450.00 for a sale average price of \$2,179.17.

The Fall BCIA Bull Sale is held annually on the second Thursday in November. Bulls offered through this sale have passed a breeding soundness exam, met minimum growth and

scrotal circumference requirements, and are ready to go to work. Thank you to all of the consignors and buyers for supporting the Fall 2003 Mississippi BCIA Bull Sale. We look forward to another successful bull sale in 2004!

	All breeds	Angus	Hereford	Charolais
# of bulls	36	29	6	1
Gross receipts	\$78,450	\$66,300	\$10,950	\$1,200
Average price	\$2,179	\$2,286	\$1,825	\$1,200
High-selling lot price	\$3,100	\$3,100	\$2,600	\$1,200

### Farm to Feedlot Contest

Over the last ten years, cattle producers have had the opportunity to evaluate feedlot performance and carcass characteristics of their cattle through the Mississippi Farm to Feedlot program. Results from this educational program have helped producers make profitable changes in their breeding, health, and management programs.

Now it's your turn to learn how Mississippi cattle perform beyond the farm gate. Challenge your cattle judgment skills and test your knowledge of cattle feeding by predicting how ten steers in the 2003-2004 Mississippi Farm to Feedlot program will perform in the feedlot and on the rail. Winners will be announced in July, and prizes will be awarded.

The Farm to Feedlot Contest entry forms and guidelines are online at <http://msucares.com/livestock/beef/ftf/contest.html> and can also be found in the January issue of Cattle Business in Mississippi. Contest entries must be received by May 1, 2004. Limit one entry per person.

For more information on the Farm to Feedlot program or contest contact your local Extension office or Blair McKinley at 662-325-3691. Good luck!

## Mississippi BCIA is Online

Mississippi BCIA is on the internet at <http://msucares.com/livestock/beef/mbcia/index.html>. The site can also be accessed by going to <http://msucares.com/>, clicking on "Livestock", clicking on "Beef Production", and then clicking on "Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association". Information available on the MBCIA website includes MBCIA announcements, officer information, by-laws, bull sale guidelines and information, bull sale results, and newsletters.

## Facts about Across-Breed EPDs

Expected progeny differences (EPDs) are a useful tool in making animal selection decisions. If you are used to EPDs for a particular breed and try to examine EPDs for another breed, you will quickly find out that a birth weight EPD of +3 means something different for each breed. In other words, one breed's EPDs cannot be directly compared to those of another breed without proper adjustment factors.

So how can we compare cattle of different breeds in terms of EPDs? Researchers at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (MARC) in Clay Center, Nebraska, develop breed adjustment factors on an annual basis. These adjustment factors are based on "head to head" comparisons of breeds at MARC. The adjustment factors published by MARC can be used to calculate across-breed EPDs for direct EPD comparisons across breeds.

Suppose a Charolais bull has a weaning weight (WW) EPD of 20. The 2003 Charolais adjustment factor for WW is 41.1, so adding 41.1 to 20 yields an across-breed WW EPD of 61.1 for the Charolais bull. If an Angus bull has a WW EPD of 45, and the 2003 adjustment factor is 0, then his across-breed WW EPD would be 45. Comparing the two across-breed EPDs reveals that the Charolais bull can be expected to sire calves that on average weigh 16.1 lbs. more ( $61.1 - 45 = 16.1$ ) at weaning than calves sired by the Angus bull.

Adjustment factors for 17 beef breeds were published for 2003. Currently MARC only publishes EPD adjustment factors for the following traits: birth weight, weaning weight, milk, and yearling weight. As a result, it is not practical to compare scrotal circumference EPDs, for example, across breeds, since those adjustment factors are not available at this time.

When looking at purchasing bulls of two or more different breeds for use in systematic crossbreeding programs, knowing how to use across-breed EPDs may be helpful in the decision-making process. Uniformity can be improved from one calf crop to the next by selecting bulls with similar across-breed EPDs. In addition to the marketing advantages of uniform calf crops, uniformity in raised replacement heifers for traits related to mature size and milk production facilitates more effective matching of feed and forage feed resources to cattle nutritional requirements.

One of the common myths about EPDs is the breed average EPD=0. This is not often the case. In fact, the base point where the EPD=0 may even be changed by the breed association at certain points in time. In addition, EPDs are computed separately for each breed, and each breed has different base points for its EPDs. Therefore, it is important to note that adjustment factors alone cannot be used to estimate average breed differences.

## Mississippi BCIA Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

(Check one) Seedstock:  Commercial:

Cattle breed(s): \_\_\_\_\_

*Completed applications and \$5 annual dues payable to Mississippi BCIA should be mailed to:*

*Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association  
c/o Jane Parish, Extension Beef Specialist  
Box 9815, Mississippi State, MS 39762*



**Dr. Jane Parish  
Extension Beef Specialist**

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