

Service Sires at Three Trees Ranch

Old habits are hard to break and since the arrival of “open A.I.” in the Angus breed more than a half century ago, it has become an old habit to offer sale females bred to “the bull of the month” whether he was identified by show winnings or excellence in the currently “in vogue” EPD traits. Our friends in the dairy industry are showing us a new path. With a two to three year head start on the availability of genomics for breeding and selection decisions, progressive dairy breeders have found that choosing a group of young sires with superior genomic values and using them across a program will produce the most consistent genetic advancement in the history of animal breeding.

In beef cattle breeding, the academic community has urged breeders to use genomic-enhanced EPD data that incorporates genomic results with phenotypic data and historical phenotypic data from ancestors in that pedigree. While that is sound advice for minimizing risk, we, and some of our scientific friends not too deeply rooted in the traditions of National Cattle Evaluation, believe that until a young sire has 30 or more phenotypic records for the traits of importance which will then generate a higher portion of its EPD accuracy level than the genomic data alone, there is potential for more rapid and dramatic progress using an evaluation of genomic data only. Making decisions on young parents based upon genomics removes the potential for phenotypic bias (both intentional and accidental) and allows a more pure and accurate selection and mating decision, in our layman’s opinion.

At Three Trees Ranch, we focus on a balance of the seven measures of: CED – calving ease direct, BW – birth weight, WW – weaning weight, YW – yearling weight, CW – carcass weight, MB – marbling score and RE – rib eye area. We believe that the average HD50K percentile ranking for those seven measures will best identify the young genomic superstars that will be the parents that allow us to make the most genetic progress toward our breeding goals at the fastest pace. These are some of the young genomic sires we have sampled in both natural service and embryo transfer to produce our current and next calf crops: