

For Immediate Release
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Developing Yearling Bulls The Spitzer Ranch Way

The Spitzer Ranch Professional Cattlemen's Bull Development Program is not a "gain test". It is a consistent way to develop sound, athletic, functionally fertile, usable bulls ready to immediately go to work for our customers the day of the sale. These long yearling (15 to 18 month) bulls are expected to go straight to work getting approximately 20 cows bred with no "let down" or acclimation period. The why seems obvious; using yearling bulls gets one more year of use from your investment and spreads dollars invested over one extra calf crop; yearling bulls represent the most progressive and current genetics available; and bulls used as yearlings get more cows pregnant as two-year-olds than unused two year old bulls.

However, not just any yearling bull will meet these expectations. Spitzer Ranch works extra hard to develop their bulls to be big enough in weight and stature with enough condition without being fat. That is critical! Bulls sold in their annual sale will weigh 1200 to 1500 pounds at 15 to 18 months old and carry only a 1/4 inch, or less, back fat. And, every bull has achieved a SATISFACTORY POTENTIAL BREEDER designation following a complete breeding soundness evaluation (BSE). It is of utmost importance to grow these bulls in a strategic manner and to collect all performance data in a timely and correct fashion. That is one of the many reasons they have their alliance bull sale partners deliver bulls to their place the same day they are weaned. They develop all sale bulls and still keep them in their individual contemporary groups to collect the most complete, unbiased and accurate data humanly possible.

The program starts with the actual weaning weight the day bulls are weaned as their On-

Test weight. There is no adjustment or warm-up period and customers get to see growth for every day of a bull's life with no unaccounted for days. All calves are held in a grass trap for about three days and then turned out in one group on fertilized crab grass pastures. While bulls are grazing they are self-fed a ration consisting of soy hulls (SH) and corn gluten feed (CGF) with Rumensin, plus minerals as needed to balance the ration. There is a series of rations that start out at 70% SH/30% CGF; then percentage of CGF is decreased to zero as bulls grow and have less need for protein. These calves also have access to coastal bermudagrass hay, but rarely do bulls have a day when they don't have something green and growing under their feet. Crab grass runs out by early September and calves will graze fescue for about two months. Most years bulls will be grazing rye/ryegrass pastures by November 1 and will stay on those pastures until sale day.

Bulls are weighed every 28 days through the Off-Test weight taken after 168 days on feed. This coincides with bulls being yearlings (+/- 45 days) which is an appropriate interval to collect all yearling performance data on each bull. Ultrasound scans for rib eye area (REA) and marbling or percent intramuscular fat (%IMF) are collected soon after with all scans being sent to the CUP (Centralized Ultrasound Processing) laboratory at Ames, Iowa.

The folks at Spitzer Ranch develop bulls for Professional Commercial Cattlemen. That's why their program is designed to grow bulls with an ADG plenty adequate to sort genetic potential, see how their carcasses look with ultrasound at about ¼ inch of fat and develop a bull very capable of completing the job of breeding cows as a yearling. And then coming back and doing it again over a long and useful life.

Periodically there is a question raised as to why bulls on the Spitzer Ranch program don't

post average daily gains (ADGs) as high as XXX Test Station or as high as bulls from other breeders. There is a pretty simple answer ... they don't want them to! If you do your homework there are two ways to get high ADGs; a hot feed or a long adjustment period. Bulls could be turned out at weaning time and they would lean-up and grow frame. Then after a month or so, bulls could be started On-Test and placed on a hot ration and it would not be uncommon to see ADGs of five pounds per day or more. That's sure a way to get high ADGs and big and fat bulls, but not a way to develop a bull that can breed as a yearling and then last to become a mature bull. As previously stated, Spitzer Ranch bulls do not get a warm-up period, but go On-Test at weaning. Then the combination of GRASS and SUPPLEMENT targets an ADG of about 3.25 pounds per day. As a result their bulls never carry the amount of fat reported from a lot of testing programs. In fact, some programs get bulls so fat (over ½ to ¾ inches) that they just don't report it and you have to ask. For reference, feedlots hope to have steers processed at 4/10s to ½ inch of fat.

Beef producers who are serious about being profitable in the cattle business should sign up to receive the popular Spitzer Ranch Newsletters. These Newsletters always provide current Bull Test Performance Reports as well as educational tips, inspiration and insights into a wide variety of timely topics of interest to those cattlemen whose goal is making money. Just call 864/972-9140, write SPITZER RANCH, 1511 HWY 59, Fair Play, SC, 29643 or email spitzeranch@mindspring.com.

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