

For Immediate Release
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There Has To Be A Better, Faster, Easier And Much More Simple Way To Utilize EPDs For Selecting A Bull Purchase

If you were told that **XYZ Best Bull Ever 1234** had a yearling weight (YW) Expected Progeny Difference (EPD) of 60 pounds. What do you now know about that bull? Absolutely nothing. ***First***, EPDs are breed specific. But even if you were then told the bull was a Brangus you still know absolutely nothing. ***Second***, EPDs are only useful for making a comparison between bulls in that specific breed. If you would now compare ole' 1234 with another Brangus bull, **ABC Sorry Bull 6789** who has an YW EPD of 5 Pounds; you now know that on average bull 1234 would sire calves weighing 55 pounds more ($60-5=55$) as yearlings than bull 6789.

A slightly more informed piece of knowledge would be to know that the Brangus Breed Average YW EPD is 45 pounds. Now you would know that 1234 would be expected to sire calves 15 pounds heavier ($60-45=15$) as yearlings than the average of all bulls in the Brangus breed (or better than the bottom one-half of all Brangus bulls). That means you have to memorize the breed average EPD for every trait reported for Brangus. And if you were utilizing a Hereford X Brangus two-breed-rotation you need to memorize the breed average EPDs for two breeds. Wait a minute!!! ***Third***, The Breed Average EPD is likely to change every time the association runs a Genetic Evaluation which is weekly for Angus, quarterly for Brangus and twice each year for most of the other breeds. Confused? No wonder we have a hard time convincing extremely smart and knowledgeable cattlemen to utilize EPDs as their genetic selection tool for those traits for which we have developed EPDs. There has to be an easier way and there is and we should have been presenting it that way from the start.

The easier way to understand and evaluate EPDs is Percentile Ranking. It's pretty simple --- find a bull supplier that provides EPD Percentile Rank for each EPD and buy bulls from among those with the highest percentile rank for whatever trait you are giving your primary selection emphasis. Of course everyone would like to buy those bulls that are in the Top 25% (or better) for every trait. Few exist and chances are those that do will exceed your bull purchase budget. But, depending on the job description you have for your bull purchase, you may be willing to accept much lower percentile rankings for your secondary traits so that priority can be placed on your most emphasized trait or those bulls with an EPD with the higher Percentile Rank for that trait.

NOTE: *The Percentile Rank is available for all animals within a particular breed if you know where to look. If your bull supplier, regardless of breed, does not make it easy for you, go on the breed association web site and somewhere there you will at least find a table with the percentile rank and the associated EPD. The Top 50% is the breed average. The Top 1% means that the individual is better in that specific trait than 99% of all other animals in that breed. Better means heavier or more for all traits except birth weight (BW) EPD where better means lighter or less birth weight. Be somewhat careful as almost all breed associations publish different Percentile Rankings for Active animals and Non-Parent animals (those that have not sired a calf). For most bull sales what you need is the Non-Parent Percentile Rankings. Please remember that Percentile Rank values will likely change some each time the Association completes an updated Sire Summary.*

The folks at Spitzer Ranch have always tried to make things simple. Their Bull Sale Catalogs have always provided the percentile rankings for each and every trait which are shown in the table just below each individual EPD. This is a great way to understand where the

individual ranks in the breed for that particular EPD. For example, where it shows “10%,” this means that particular EPD value is in the highest 10%, of all Non-Parent bulls in the entire Brangus breed as determined from the latest Brangus Genetic Evaluation and published in the current Brangus Sire Summary.

The Spitzer family hope to see you at their twenty-third annual **PROFESSIONAL CATTLEMEN’S BRANGUS BULL SALE** scheduled for **Saturday, February 27, 2016, 1:00 PM EST at Spitzer Ranch just north of Fair Play, SC.** They are also pleased to welcome their longtime cooperators Hunts H+ Brangus as partners in this year’s sale. The **SPITZER RANCH WINTER NEWSLETTER** will go in the mail shortly after Christmas. If you wish your name added to their mailing list call 864/972-9140, send an email note to info@srbulls.com or write SPITZER RANCH, 1511 HWY 59, Fair Play, SC, 29643.

The winter newsletter will contain a Final Bull Test Performance Report with complete performance data and current EPDs for those bulls being developed for the 2016 bull sale. Additionally they always include educational tips, inspiration and insights into a variety of timely topics of interest to those cattlemen whose goal is increased profitability. The SPITZER RANCH Facebook page has exploded with “Likes” and there are now almost 1900 followers of their posts and QUOTE OF THE WEEK. For the most current information about the Spitzer Ranch Program and their February Bull Sale be sure to visit their WEB SITE at www.srbulls.com.

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