

Raising bulls for today's market

by Stacy Dohle

Raising dependable and effective bulls with today's market conditions can be challenging, but at Flying H Genetics in Lowry City, Missouri, using mother natures' tools may be working.

"It is no longer necessary to feed bulls like feedlot steers," says Jared Wareham, regional manager for Flying H Genetics.

At Flying H, they use the technology of grass based feeding and genetics to breed the best cattle and then separate them by their performance data.

"We raise our bulls in realistic conditions and in a realistic environment so when our customer takes the bull home they are ready to work, not ready to melt," Wareham explains.

Flying H bulls, which consist of Balancers, SimAngus, Simmental and black and red Angus, are raised on pastures that are typical of many Midwest farms— fescue, gamagrass and clover.

Along with their intensive grazing style regimen, the bulls are ground fed a small grain ration which is about 1.5 percent of their

bodyweight. "Our bulls walk to grass, walk to water and that makes them in better condition when the commercial cowman takes them home to work. Also, since I'm around them every day they are also extremely docile," Wareham says.

Along with the grass based feeding routine, Flying H also depends on today's technologies like DNA and EPD data which helps them develop bulls like breeding animals.

To avoid feeding young growing bulls like a fat steer, they evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their genetics through alternative methods that are highly accurate.

These methods include ultrasounding heifer mates to the bulls, participating in carcass testing programs which require them to contribute large quantities of semen at their expense, and provide the buyer with a complete DNA profile for every animal. Wareham explains, "These technologies tell us as much if not more than other measures and allows us to go back to Mother Nature and use her tools. This is not a forage test, rather more of a hybrid of both true forage and feedlot practices. We bring both philosophies together and extract the positives and utilize them in a cohesive manner to develop young breeding animals."

With two bull sales a year and private treaty sales, Flying H is working on building a customer base, getting cattlemen familiar with their product, building a reputation on customer service and selling the com-

mercial cowman bulls that will work from the grass to the grill. He continues, "We are not here to build a reputation on flashy numbers. We don't push our bulls with grain, we don't grow them as fast and we can't brag about 800 pound weaning weights. That is not what we do. We have 600 pound weaning weights and 1,100 pound yearling weights. Our cattle do off the farm what we said they did on our farm." □



A set of yearling bulls at Flying H Genetics.

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