

BRAD Z RANCH

Optimal Beef Genetics

Fellow Entrepreneurs,

We take this opportunity to invite you to our private treaty open house bull sale on Saturday, March 6th from 10 AM to 4 PM. Join us for lunch and a bid off on multiple signers following lunch.

The bulls have performed very well in spite of the weather.

We will keep the bulls at our risk and expense until May 1st and there is a \$100 discount if you pick them up by that date.

Come help us christen our new sale shed, the old one a victim of deep snow.

There continues to be debate on what is proper cow size. Feed resources and environment will have an upper hand in this decision. If fertility is kept high (early 1st calf and 365 day interval with moderate milk), we will go a long way in maintaining efficiency.

Our first calf heifers (140) ended up with five open with only grass as their feed resources after calving. We continue to try to manage as a good commercial operation would, with no frills.

The bulls will be tested in multiple ways before May 1st: semen, ultrasound, PI3, average daily gain, and genetics defects. The real test is in the pasture and the reports have been very gratifying.

Come March 6th and let us deliver one or more bulls to you in your pasture, you might call this a form of pasteurization.

See you in March,

Jim Bradford



Mark Your Calendars!

**Our 2010 Bull Sale
is on
Saturday, March 6th.**

Notes about Sale Day

- ◆ Yearling bulls will be kept at our risk and expense until May 1st.
- ◆ Two year old bulls may be taken home as soon as they're semen tested.
- ◆ \$100 off if the bull is picked up by May 1st.
- ◆ All bulls vaccinated for Vibrio, Lepto, IBR, BRSV, PI3, and BRD.
- ◆ Bulls are guaranteed as breeders for the first season (60 days recommended for yearlings).
- ◆ Bulls will be semen tested plus any other health test needed before pickup time.
- ◆ 2%-10% discounts for multiple bull purchases.
- ◆ NH and AM free

How Our Sale Works

If you haven't been to our sale here at the farm before, we can give you a quick run down of what to expect when you arrive. Our sale is a private treaty sale, and we find this to be a less stressful environment for our customers to make their decisions in as compared to a full fledged auction. Our bulls are pre-priced, and will be grouped on sale day according to those prices. The morning of the sale, or anytime prior to, we encourage you to look through the pens and find the bulls you think will be the best fit for you and your operation. Anytime you would like any additional information on the individual bulls just ask, and we will do our best to assist you. Once your selections are made,

find the bulls' numbers on our bull board in the sale room. Mark your interest in the bull by placing your buyer number on the tag that corresponds to your bull. Marking the bull does not obligate you to take the bull, it just indicates that you have an interest in him. Feel free to mark as many bulls that you are interested in. Lunch is served at noon, and after lunch we will go through the board, bull by bull, first settling any bulls with interest from several parties. This will be done through simple bidding in increments of \$50 and is open to anyone. If the bull is a \$2000 bull for instance, and several parties are interested in him, we will settle it by asking for \$2050 and go up by

\$50 until no one raises the bid. Once the new owner is determined, we will move on to the next bull. We will go through any bull that has a buyer number on it for each price group, and at that time you will need to decide whether you want the bull at the base price, or if you prefer to scratch your number on that bull in preference for another.

Whenever we have passed a bull you can at anytime place your number on them and own them at the base price. After the sale we will keep the bulls until the 1st of May, or give a \$100 discount if they are picked up prior to that date. You are free to take the bulls earlier if so desired.

Changes for Sale Day

Our repeat customers will notice a few changes on sale day this year. First and foremost will be the building our sale is held in. Shortly after New Year's Day we lost the roof on our sale room connected to our bull barn. We are working on having a new, larger room up by sale day, Irlmeier Construction has been doing an unbelievable job of getting the structure up and covered.

As you may recall, last year we provided a sale day catalog to provide additional information on the bulls selling. This year we've streamlined it to a two page supplement sheet. This sheet will contain additional information about maternal siblings to the bulls. We will make note of sisters that are in the herd, brothers

that have sold in the past, and brothers that graded CAB. Also on this supplement sheet, we will note where the bull's EPDs rank against other non parent bulls in the breed. Besides being available sale day, we will provide you this information at the farm when you come to inspect the bulls and on our website.

Another change this year will be carcass ultrasound results on all bulls age appropriate. Just over 50 of the sale bulls should have ultrasound results on them in time for the sale. In order to do this, the bulls will need to be 320 days old at scanning, to include as many as possible, we will scan the bulls just over a week before sale day. These

bulls will make up 2 contemporary groups, one composed of early born bulls to cows, and one of early born bulls to heifers. Two other contemporary groups will be scanned when they are age appropriate after the sale.

Finally, as you will note on the enclosed sheet, we have placed \$2800 on 4 of the bulls. As with all our priced bulls, this doesn't mean there aren't bulls priced cheaper that aren't also worth \$2800. What it does mean is that these four bulls were bulls that we considered using in our own herd. If there isn't interest in them at this level, then we will consider retaining them for use in our herd.

Cold Weather and Birth Weights

Global warming proponents need to have wintered in Iowa this year. A long, hard winter has created numerous problems for those of us in beef production. Stalks have been covered in deep snow and with several layers of ice to boot, causing hay to be used at an alarming rate. Bitter cold and strong winds have taken their toll on cow body condition as well. It is likely that this winter's effect will be seen throughout the coming year, as cow condition at calving can have considerable impact on rebreed rates,

and feed costs will have made a substantial impact on all of our bottom lines.

Another area this winter will have impact is in calf birth weights. An University of Nebraska study from 1993 to 1998 looked at the affect of cold weather on birth weights. During this study, two year old heifers were bred to the same AI bull for each year of the study. Over the study they found a variance of 11 degrees for average winter temperature.

This 11 degree variance in temperature was matched by an 11 pound variance in birth weights. While not a perfect relationship each year, on average, birth weights increased one pound for every one degree decrease in temperature. That same degree decrease in temperature also created a 2.5% increase in calving difficulty. This is attributed to colder weather causing increased blood flow within the cow. The increased blood flow delivers more nutrient to the fetus, and thus increases its growth rate.

If You Come to a Fork in the Road, Take it

The last two years have presented some interesting opportunities to cattlemen when it comes to their current herd sires. There has been a high cull value placed on these sires, and this value has been enough to recoup a significant portion of the original investment in them. While we can't guarantee this will continue into 2010, you can check with your local sale barn to find what current price for cull bulls are. If this value continues to be similar

to where it has been in the last two years, and if current finances allow, there is no reason to keep in the herd a sire that hasn't performed, one with poor disposition, or one that you find yourself hesitant to use another year.

When you visit us on sale day, first fill whatever your current needs might be, but once the sale is over and you've had a chance to make your own as-

essment of how things went, be sure to look back through the pens at those bulls still available. Since the bulls are pre-priced, you will know exactly what it will cost to replace other bulls in your herd while staying within your budget. We think you will be able to find great opportunities not just before, but after the sale as well.

Using \$W in Your Selection

The industry is full of many varying viewpoints on cow size, milking ability, and calf performance. There are figures showing the "economics" of certain decisions any number of ways. The last few years the industry has come to realize that more performance doesn't necessarily mean more profit. It will also realize that lower cost doesn't necessarily mean more profit either. It is im-

portant to remember the best female to own is the female that calves early, gets bred back, and weans an acceptable calf every year. The Angus Association does have an index we can use to evaluate whether more or less performance means profit or loss for us, however. \$W is a selection index taking into account several EPDs and meant to indicate profit at weaning. If

Bull A has a \$20 \$W, and Bull B has a \$30, then Bull B is expected to sire calves that are \$10 more profitable/head at weaning. This is after we account for differences in milk production, cow size, feed cost, calving ease, and calf performance. While not to be used as a sole means of selection, \$W can assist you in finding the sires that will help you find optimal.



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Genetics: A foundation yes, but a roof as well.



As noted earlier, the snow took its toll on our small sale room. We were fortunate, since there are numerous stories about roofs on building much larger and more significant than ours falling in. Often you will hear seedstock producers talking about the foundation genetics in their program, or how their genetics will build a good foundation for your own program. We at the Brad Z have no argument with this. Yet also remember besides providing a solid foundation, the right genetics also provide protection for you when the environment throws different stresses your way.



Brads Shear Force 985
CED: +3 Birth: +3.2 Wean: +55
Year: +98 Milk: +16



Brads Intuition 9100
1/2 Simmental x 1/2 Angus
Dam Production: 3 @ 107