

Virginia Angus Association

The Angus Connection

June 2025

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A Letter From Your President...

Walter Nichols



Virginia Angus Association
Members,

We are pleased to share some exciting updates and news with you. We are thrilled to announce that The GIFT sale was a tremendous success. Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed in this achievement. Please note the changes for Beef Expo dates next year. The event will now run April 15-18, 2026 (Wednesday-Saturday). Sales will remain on Thursday going forward, with the 2026 GIFT Sale happening on Thursday April 16th. Keep an eye on the GIFT Sale tab of the website for more information as we get closer to the event. We hope to see you there!

There are some exciting new website changes to better assist our membership. Next time you log on you will see a new calendar of events tab and classified listings. The calendar tab is a more user-friendly version allowing you to view all upcoming events in one quick glance. Members can list their upcoming sales, meetings & events along with a link to a website or event page. The classified listing page allows members to list hay, cattle or equipment for sale. To take advantage of either of these new pages please email your

posting information to Stefanie at vaangus1933@gmail.com

Our producer trip to CAB went exceptionally well. We would like to extend our gratitude to the Virginia Cattle Industry Board for the grant that made this trip possible. If you would like to see this grant or one like it offered again please reach out to me, Stefanie Manbeck or any Board Member to discuss.

The 2025 Virginia Angus Handbook is expected to ship by July. Thank you to all who advertised in this year's copy. We look forward to providing you with this valuable resource.

Finally, we want to wish the best of luck to the Juniors as they travel to the upcoming Eastern Regional & Junior National Angus Shows. We pray for their safety during competitions and travel.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the Virginia Angus Association.

Best regards,
Walter Nichols
President
Virginia Angus Association

Register Today for Beef Cattle University

Virginia Beef Cattle University will return to Blacksburg July 21-23rd. BCU offers beef producers an unparalleled opportunity to enhance their knowledge through over 30 educational breakout sessions and hands-on experiences, covering the latest industry trends and techniques. Participants will benefit from extraordinary keynote speakers,

while also gaining valuable networking opportunities with fellow producers and industry experts. The event fosters both learning and connection, with a relaxed happy hour designed to build lasting relationships in the beef cattle community.

Speakers include Brad White, Josh Maples, Amanda Radke, Rodrigo

Marques, Scott Greiner, John Currin, Ron Tessman, Jody Wade, Alex White & more!

For a full schedule & registration link visit vabeefcattleu.com



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S: *BALDRIDGE JORDAN // D: *ANTCZAK GAMMER 1140

CED	BW	WW	YW	SC	MILK	FL	DOC	CLAW	ANGLE	PAP	CW	MARB	REA	SM	SB	SC
+12	+6	+86	+147	+95	+32	+1.09	+16	+51	+41	+41	+88	+1.28	+1.47	+94	+239	+404
15%	35%	10%	15%	50%	15%	40%	70%	60%	25%	35%	2%	15%	1%	5%	2%	1%



Henke *Historic*

BD: 08-25-2021 // BULL *20268953 // TATTOO: 1175
S: *CONNEALY CLARITY // D: *HF ROBYN 9149

CED	BW	WW	YW	SC	MILK	FL	DOC	CLAW	ANGLE	PAP	CW	MARB	REA	SM	SB	SC
+15	-1.1	+76	+140	+1.24	+29	+1.05	+27	+25	+33	+1.78	+84	+1.20	+90	+96	+230	+394
3%	10%	25%	20%	30%	30%	50%	15%	1%	3%	65%	3%	10%	20%	4%	2%	1%



Burgett *Titan*

BD: 03-01-2023 // BULL *20876853 // TATTOO: L047
S: *WOODHILL COMSTOCK // D: *BAF LADY E087 H045

CED	BW	WW	YW	SC	MILK	FL	DOC	CLAW	ANGLE	PAP	CW	MARB	REA	SM	SB	SC
+12	-.3	+75	+136	+1.14	+35	+1.24	+29	+45	+39	-.21	+60	+1.65	+77	+108	+212	+383
15%	20%	30%	25%	35%	10%	1%	10%	35%	15%	25%	30%	2%	35%	1%	5%	1%



AAR *Kendall* J127

BD: 02-15-2021 // BULL *20154006 // TATTOO: J127
S: *AAR KENDALL 7015 // D: *AAR PRIMROSE 7101

CED	BW	WW	YW	SC	MILK	FL	DOC	CLAW	ANGLE	PAP	CW	MARB	REA	SM	SB	SC
+7	+1.9	+79	+144	+1.29	+38	+1.12	+28	+29	+23	+32	+81	+87	+76	+106	+210	+378
45%	65%	20%	15%	25%	2%	20%	15%	2%	1%	35%	4%	30%	35%	1%	5%	1%



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Recap of The Science Behind the Sizzle: VA Cattle producers travel to Wooster, Ohio!

By Lydia Kelley

Our first stop was The Culinary Center. Kara Lee, CAB Director, did an amazing job introducing the brand and showing us around. Darian Brooks helped lead the tour through the executive, marketing, and warehouse buildings. We were able to see the boardroom and learn lots of history from the displays they had around the room. We were able to catch John Sitka going into the boardroom and got the chance to speak to him as well. Darian Brooks explained the communications aspect of the brand. She showed social media pictures and videos as well as apps to get the brands message into the world.

We then moved into the kitchen and studio where many of the promotional pictures and videos are taken. It was impressive to see where and how they take these amazing photos and how that has changed over the years.

There was a wall of menus that contained Certified Angus beef with chef's signatures on them.

Some of the menus were from other countries in other languages. We were able to see a map of all the countries Certified Angus beef is in. Before going on this trip, I never knew it was an international brand! While speaking with marketing we were educated on the difference between the traditional Certified Angus Beef, the prime, natural and ranch to table options. Moving into the we saw displays that would be in a grocery store selling the brand. I was most interested in the materials used in other counties, specifically a certain meat card they had to make especially tall for a Spanish company that slices their beef thin, but stacks its almost 18' tall to package!

For the brand's 40th anniversary, they commissioned an artist to paint

forty barns with the brand, which I thought was an interesting promotion.

Moving into the Meat Lab we met Daniel Clark, Meat Scientist. He explained the ten quality specifications to become certified in a processing plant. We were able to taste select, USDA choice, Certified Angus choice, and Certified Angus prime. I had never tasted them back- to-back, it was eye opening to really know the difference between the grades. We looked at a carcass to explain the quality specifications. It was interesting to hear the reasons why carcasses do not make the brand, with the main reason being marbling.

Before lunch, Kirsten Nickles spoke with us about how CAB is initiating and communicating brand sustainability to customers. The lunch served was absolutely amazing. It was some of the best food I have ever had!

After lunch we returned to the Meat Lab to look at beef cuts with Daniel Clark. We broke into teams and were able to participate in hands on stations and activities. We worked through each primal cut, guessing the largest and most expensive. After ranking the cuts Dr. Daniel Clark showed us each primal and different cuts that come from each. Many cuts I had never heard of! He would then make that cut and prepare it for us right in the kitchen! My favorite new cut was the sirloin flap.

Lastly, Dr. Clark showed us the cost benefit of selling Certified Angus beef. He cut a primal cut into baseball steak, Coulotte, and stew meat. He weighed each and Kara Lee divided the whole price of the primal for choice and CAB into a per pound basis and applied it to each weighed out cut. At the end the choice had \$1.64 profit and CAB had \$7.68 profit.

Our final stop was with Kara Lee who explained CAB on a cattlemen level and how we fit in. She detailed the Ranch-to-Table program and how we could get involved.

I am very grateful for the opportunity I had to visit the Certified Angus Beef Brand. I learned so much that I will definitely take with me into my career and future. I learned things in a way that I never would have in college which helped me take more from it. All of the food was amazing. It was great to try new things throughout the trip. I greatly enjoyed the meat explanation, that is probably where I learned the most. Thank you again for this opportunity. I could never express how grateful I am.

- Lydia Kelly is a 19 year-old Virginia Tech student from Bedford VA who attended this trip. Other participants included: David Chevalier, Derek Crouse, Curt Friedel, Mary Lynne Harris, Stefanie Marshall, Laura H. Smith & Matthew. St. Clair. The Virginia Angus Board of Directors would like to extend a sincere thanks to Certified Angus Beef for extending the welcome to our group & The Virginia Cattle Industry Board for their grant which paid for travel expenses.



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Handling the Heat

Explore solutions and genetic opportunities to manage heat stress in your herd.

Year after year, high temperatures in hot summer months often lead to stress for both cattle and producers. Heat stress may slow productivity in a herd, but managing the effects and educating yourself on the hot topic may be worthwhile.

Heating up

Four key factors that affect heat stress are temperature, humidity, wind speed and solar radiation, says A.J. Tarpoff, associate professor and beef extension veterinarian at Kansas State University. He explains those factors, along with the cattle's accumulative heat load, contribute immensely to their comfort level in higher temperatures.

Tarpoff says without proper time to cool down, cattle are not able to begin the following day with a clean slate. Instead they begin a backwards cycle where problems may occur.

"The consequences of heat stress are really the coping behaviors of cattle to try to cool themselves," Tarpoff explains. "The animal is in a thermoneutral zone where they're most comfortable, they're most productive. If they get out of that comfort zone, that's where we have these coping behavior changes to help alleviate some of that heat."

A notable coping mechanism is reduced dry matter intake. He explains while trying to cool themselves, cattle don't have an appetite that increases their daily gain. Additionally, he says cattle may gather around water tanks, not necessarily consuming the water, but crowding nearby.

"All of these behaviors are not advantageous for growth and development," he says. "They're not eating, they're standing longer than what they normally do, they have abnormal behaviors that really hinder performance."

Cooling down

Addressing irregular coping behaviors doesn't have to be complex. Simple solutions like adjusting management techniques already used on-farm can be easy and cost-efficient

ways to manage heat stress.

Tarpoff shares that simple necessities, like water and feed, should be monitored closely when managing heat stress.

"Water is the most essential nutrient to life, and water becomes extremely important during the summer months," Tarpoff notes.

Cattle's water intake increases with a rise in temperature, and it's crucial plentiful water is always available. Tarpoff explains water needs may double on any given day in hot summer months, so providing a quality water source is key.

"Whether that's increasing water tanks, pumping or having a cool water source available to them during those points of time, that's a really critical piece," he says.

The other essential in this equation is feed. Whether cattle are grazing or in a feedlot setting, he explains the digestion of feed will generate heat. Therefore, creating a mealtime routine that complements a cooler time of day will prevent overstimulation of daily heat-generating events.

"Maybe we feed a little bit later into the evening hours, where we can have that heated digestion peak in the overnight cooling time and not have the additive effects during the day," Tarpoff says.

While feed and water are the top priority, maximizing their environment can reduce the stress within animals significantly, according to Tarpoff.

For cattle that reside in dirt pens, they are prone to the effects of heat absorbed by the dirt itself.

"If we have a packed dirt pen during the heat of the day, it may get upwards to 140 degrees," he says. "That's pretty extreme."

Utilizing bedding, like its usage in winter months, can provide relief to animals, as its reflective ability can reduce the heat up to 25°.

"Shade's a wonderful tool, too. It's an investment in the animals and their

well-being," Tarpoff says. "If shade's going to be utilized, critical care should be taken to ensure that there's enough of it that all animals can utilize it at the same time without getting too packed."

Finally, a fix that may come with questions is using sprinklers. Tarpoff explains there are several misconceptions with sprinklers, and it is not uncommon to see them used incorrectly in a feedyard.

"Sprinklers should really be utilized to help cool the pen floor in the overnight hours, not to wet the animals during the heat of the day," he says.

A genetic approach

Keeping things simple and forming routines may help reduce the effects of heat stress. In the Angus breed, producers can plan even further and view solutions from a genetic standpoint. Kelli Retallick-Riley, president of Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) explains that the hair shedding (HS) expected progeny difference (EPD) is targeted at helping producers breed more heat-tolerant cattle.

"Early-summer hair shed was a trait that we started to capture not only for heat thermal tolerance, but also fescue toxicosis," she mentions.

She notes the hardy fescue grass may cause some issues in the Southeast region of the United States, where it is often utilized for long grazing cycles.

"The issue with it is that it can form a fungi that can be toxic to our animals and actually can, with the same things with heat stress, can basically affect the overall fertility and performance of those females, especially as they wean off calves," Retallick-Riley says.

She explains the HS EPD combats toxic fescue and can alleviate some effects of heat stress because as females shed their winter coats faster and earlier in the year, they are better able to tolerate hot conditions.

With the evolution of the EPD, producers can now score females on a scale from 1 to 5 from the convenience a side-by-side cab or horseback.

“It’s a fairly easy trait to measure. We don’t have to get cattle in the chute, we don’t have to do things like that from a management standpoint,” Retallick-Riley says.

As she points out, the breed takes the driver’s seat when it comes to innovating solutions for challenging environments and reduced productivity. Utilizing the HS EPD and simple solutions can reduce the consequences of heat stress.

“Angus breeders have always been very keen on adapting new technologies, new scoring systems, new genetic tools, all those sorts of things,” she says. “It’s a testament to their commitment to working together as a group of association members to drive genetic progress forward.”



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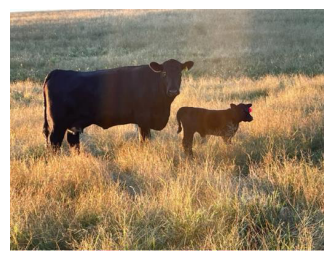
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NEW
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ANNUAL UPDATES
EPDs, \$VALUES AND ECONOMIC ASSUMPTIONS

The American Angus Association released three new maternal expected progeny differences (EPDs) on Friday, May 23, alongside annual updates to the genetic evaluation and the economic assumptions used to calculate \$Values. Users of Angus genetics can now utilize the Functional Longevity (FL), Teat Size (Teat) and Udder Suspension (UDDR) EPDs, developed by Angus Genetics, Inc. (AGI®), to help make selection decisions for their operations. In addition, these three new EPDs were incorporated into both the Maternal Weaned Calf Value Index (\$M) and the Combined Value Index (\$C), further refining the characterization of maternal function inside those indexes.

“Providing additional selection tools centered around improved maternal function has been a priority for the Board of Directors and Association staff for many years,” says Smitty Lamb, chair of the Breed Improvement Committee of the American Angus Association® Board of Directors. “I commend breeders who have collected the data to help us get there.”

“We have made significant progress in terminal traits, but as a breed, we need to remember, the Angus cow is what got us here,” Lamb says. “We need to continue to find and select the

outliers who exemplify the very best of the breed’s maternal excellence.”

The Association also released updates to Heifer Pregnancy (HP) and feed efficiency genetic evaluations which, along with improving the traits themselves, reduces computing time for these evaluations by as much as 60%. This is key to ensuring on-time delivery of the weekly genetic evaluation. Additional details on each part of the annual update can be found below. Annual genomic score updates, which have typically coincided with the annual update and the release of the 2025 Fall Sire Evaluation Report, will be released on June 27 and include genomic scores for the three newly-released EPDs. This separation increases efficiency for both processes.

Maternal EPDs released

The cow is a cornerstone of any successful operation, and Angus females have proven themselves to be reliable, consistent producers. Their merit is reflected in the population of the U.S. cow herd, which is now more than 80% Angus influenced. Producers have spent years selecting cattle with not only good maternal strengths, but those who exemplify the best of the Angus breed.

“We’ve always bred for cows,” says Mark Nikkel, owner of Mill Brae Ranch

since 2018, and herd manager since 1987. “The bulls pay the bills and keep you in business, but there’s got to be a cow first.”

Guided by that principle, Mark and his wife, Janice, began tracking udder quality on the Maple Hill, Kan., operation more than a decade before the Association formalized a scoring guide; and, prior to that, their selection was done anecdotally.

The current Association scoring system was established in 2021, based on guidelines set by the Beef Improvement Federation, and uses a score from 1 to 9 to characterize both teat size and udder suspension. Scores are collected on dams within 24 hours of birth and can be submitted along with data collected on the calf.

“The teat size and shape is so important to us as we calve. ... Age plays into this as well; that’s where the longevity piece comes in,” Janice explains. “When you have a 3-year-old that shows a decline in udder quality, they’re not going to be here very long. Now we’ve wasted a lot of time and money to produce this high-quality animal to send her down the road, and that makes no sense.”

This is a sentiment that Esther Tarpoff, director of performance

American Angus EPD Updates, cont.

programs for the Association, hears often. In the cattle business, seedstock producers and commercial cow-calf operators play the long game, it's important to have confidence that today's selections are based on the best information available to help ensure a profitable outcome in later breeding cycles.

"We're excited to move these EPDs into full production, enabling weekly predictions of the traits," Tarpoff says. "This advancement enhances the ability of Association members and, more importantly, their commercial cow-calf customers to select for cow survivability and lifetime productivity — an area that has been missing from the Angus genetic toolkit until now."

Following a dispersal of the original Mill Brae herd in 2018 and a brief break from raising seedstock, Mark and Janice made the decision to purchase back several foundational females that were still in production at other operations to reestablish their registered Angus operation. They made the commitment, at that time, to enroll in the Association's Inventory Reporting program to earn MaternalPlus® distinction, and submit their historic teat and udder data. The two initiatives gave the Nikkels access to the three research EPDs.

"I used those spreadsheets, and I know they are just research EPDs; but I am so thankful I had access to them," Janice says. "If an individual bull that we were looking at didn't score well in the longevity, teat and udder categories, he went off the list ... it takes too long to overcome [challenges with] those types of traits."

The FL EPD aims at improving the cow herd by increasing the number of calves a female can produce over her lifetime. The Inventory Reporting program and the commitment made by enrolled members was crucial to the ability to characterize this trait. As a whole herd reporting system, Inventory Reporting and its second tier, MaternalPlus, tells a more complete story about a herd and its females. Every

year, each female is reported to have a calf, a reason code for not having one or a reason code for culling.

This allows for more complete data to be quantified and used to predict the number of calves a female (or daughters of a sire) is expected to produce by six years of age. With the production release of this EPD, all registered Angus cattle with either a genotype or phenotype on file will have an FL EPD.

"With the use of technology like genomics, we are turning generation intervals faster than ever," says Kelli Retallick-Riley, AGI president. "Traits like udder quality or lifetime production records that need to be collected on sires' daughters take time; producers will be able to utilize the FL, Teat and UDDR EPDs as risk mitigation tools, especially in today's fast-paced genetic landscape where an A.I. (artificial insemination) sire may no longer be actively marketed by the time his daughters reach full production."

Along with the release of the three new EPDs, \$M has been updated to include the new traits. As new traits are incorporated into a \$Value, economic weights are reallocated across both existing and newly introduced EPDs. Despite the inclusion of additional traits to \$M, correlations remain above 0.90. This is because \$M already had several other traits considered in its calculations, and the addition of the new EPDs allows for a refinement of the index — not an overhaul of the economic model. However, individual animals may experience notable re-ranking depending on their performance in specific traits.

As part of the makeup of \$C, the updates to \$M will also be reflected in the \$C index with an even greater correlation of 0.98. Producers can learn more about the research backing the Functional Longevity, Teat Size and Udder Suspension EPDs and Dollar Values on Angus.org. Additional details about the annual updates are available in this Angus University video.

Heifer Pregnancy EPD updates

Building on the 2024 updates that improved the description of Heifer Pregnancy in the breed, additional refinements to the genetic parameters have led to an updated heritability estimate for the trait. Last May, adjustments to the contemporary group guidelines for Heifer Pregnancy were completed; this allowed the EPD to better account for environmental factors. This year, genetic variance components were updated using the current phenotypic database and more efficient methods for predicting variance components in binary traits.

"Updating genetic parameters and heritability is a routine procedure for all genetic evaluations. As more data is recorded and selection takes place, the population evolves, and the distribution of variances can change," said Andre Garcia, AGI senior geneticist. "Updating these parameters and the heritability of traits with the most current data and methodology ensures that the genetic evaluations are efficient, and EPDs are accurate and relevant for the Angus population."

The heritability of HP moved from 0.15 to 0.07 because models now better account for environmental factors which redistributed the variance within the population. The correlation between the new EPD and the previous remains high at 0.98 (a one would indicate it was exactly the same trait), which means there was not a significant reranking of animals, although producers will notice the overall spread of the HP EPD is smaller and a slight reduction in individual EPD accuracy. This is a result of reduced heritability. Additional details on the methodology behind this update are available in this Angus University video and an upcoming By the Numbers article to be published in the June issue of the Angus Journal.

Feed intake model updates

This 2025 update comes as the result of an extensive research and testing effort. To improve efficiency and address the complexity of the model used to predict feed efficiency selection tools,

dry mater intake (DMI) and residual average daily gain (RADG) EPDs, this update refines the contemporary groups, introduces animal age, and re-estimates variance components and heritability.

The biggest change for producers to keep in mind is the contemporary group. Research found age variation among contemporary groups and environment prior to the feed intake test period have a significant effect on performance. Breeders collecting feed efficiency records will need to have at least two animals from the same birth herd, year and season in a group to have the records included in the evaluation. Single animal contemporary groups will be excluded. Prediction accuracy will increase by 9.2% with the update.

Correlation on EPDs from the previous model was high (≥ 0.96), however, producers may see individual changes to EPDs and accuracy, as well as minor reranking. Producers will see minimal movement in the indexes that consider feed efficiency, such as Beef Value (\$B), but will potentially see slightly more changes in \$B's subindex, Feedlot Value (\$F). Additional details are available in this Angus University video and in a future By the Numbers article to be published in the June issue of the Angus Journal.

Economic assumptions updated

Producers recognize changes in the cost of inputs like feed from year to year can impact management decisions. To account for the ever-changing factors

of the U.S. beef industry and connected industry, \$Values use a seven-year rolling average to account for economic variation. The cost and revenue data, sourced from CattleFax, shows a continued rise in both ration cost and weaned calf sale prices. As of May 2025, feed cost was up thirteen dollars to \$237 while weaned steer calf prices averaged \$203 per hundredweight (cwt.), up \$21. Respectively, heifer calves averaged \$183 with a price jump a few dollars shy of the steer increase. Because of a similar increase across the board, the new economic assumptions had little impact on the \$Values. A detailed breakdown of the economic assumptions can be found on Angus.org.

The 36th annual Virginia Angus Association Genetic Investment Sale took place on Thursday April 17th in conjunction with Virginia Beef Expo.

Auctioneer: Dave Mullins

Lots	Gross	Average
3 Open Heifers	\$25,000.00	\$8,333.00
15 Bred Heifers	\$78,000.00	\$5,200.00
7 Fall Pairs	\$72,000.00	\$10,285.00
4 Spring Pairs	\$36,750.00	\$9,187.00
1 Special Lots	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
30 Total Registered Females	\$241,750.00	\$8,058.00
30 Total Registered Live Lots	\$241,750.00	\$8,058.00
27 Embryos (no.)	\$47,250.00	\$1,750.00
2 Flush	\$22,800.00	\$11,400.00
8 Semen (units)	\$3,175.00	\$396.00
41 Reported Sale Total	\$314,975.00	\$7,682.00

Mark the calendar and plan to join us for the 2026 sale, Thursday April 16th!

Virginia Angus Association

644 Greenville Ave #220
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Upcoming Events

June 19-22	Eastern Regional Junior Angus Show
July 21-23	Beef Cattle University, Blacksburg VA
October 4	Point Pleasant Angus Production Sale, Bland VA
October 18	Whitestone Farm Brand of Quality Sale, Aldie VA
October 31	Hokie Harvest Sale, Blacksburg VA
November 1	MC Livestock Fall Bull Sale, Greenville VA
November 1	Mystic Hill Bull & Female Sale, Culpeper VA
November 28	Pratt Cattle Company Black Friday Bull & Female Sale, Atkins VA
December 5	Knoll Crest Total Performance Bull Sale, Redhouse VA
December 13	BCIA Culpeper Bull Sale, Culpeper VA