

25 YEAR HISTORY OF THE MCA/MSU BULL TEST/EVALUATION PROGRAM

1988-2013

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The MCA/MSU Bull Test/Evaluation Program has been a very successful program for beef cattle genetic improvement over the last 25 years. The goal has been to aid beef producers in obtaining superior bulls that have been evaluated in a common environment for growth, breeding and structural soundness and carcass merit. It began in 1988 as a joint venture of the Michigan Cattlemen's Association (MCA) and the Michigan State University (MSU) beef cattle extension faculty and staff. The bull evaluation committee is composed of elected representatives from the consignors of all breeds being tested plus MCA and MSU staff.

A joint committee of MCA and MSU personnel visited several potential sites and Stoneman Farms near Breckenridge in Gratiot County was selected as the site. The Dale Stoneman family agreed to build a new facility to feed the bulls using a moderate energy corn and corn silage based ration. MCA was to handle the financial aspects of the test and MSU was to oversee the data collection and catalog preparation for the sale. The first year 98 bulls consigned by 60 breeders representing 13 beef breeds were evaluated. Prior to delivery to Stoneman Farms the bulls were tested and vaccinated following a rigorous health protocol. The test index was a combination of average daily gain (ADG) ratio and weight per day of age (WDA) ratio over the 112 day test. At the conclusion of the test, the bulls received a breeding soundness examination and additional health tests. The top indexing 64 bulls were sold at public auction on March 18, 1989 at an average price of \$1,434.

The test/evaluation program continued at Stoneman Farms for 14 years. In the fall of 2002,

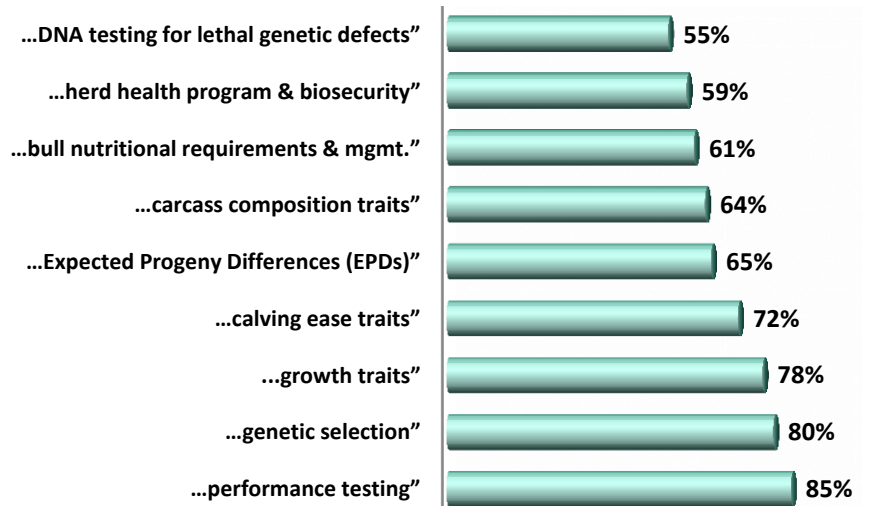
Plank Farms, near Crystal, Michigan became the site for the program in a newly constructed facility. The first seven sales were held at Stoneman Farms. The next eight sales were held at the Michigan Livestock Exchange sale facility in St. Louis, Michigan and the remaining sales have been held at Plank Farms. Bill Sheridan has been the auctioneer for all 25 sales. The test index to establish sale order has changed over the years. It now includes breed percentiles for several EPDs in addition to the ADG and WDA percentiles. The acceptable age limits for bulls being consigned were from January 1 through April 30 of the year that each test began, but now bulls born from September 1 of the preceding year through April 30 are now accepted. Ultrasound evaluation for rib eye area and external fat are now included as well as DNA genomic analyses when they are available.

Over the 25 years from 1988-89 through 2012-13, 2,172 bulls have been evaluated. The 275 breeders who consigned these bulls were from Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Ontario. A total of 1,324 bulls were sold through the first 24 sales. Over 98% of the bulls sold through the annual sales have been purchased by Michigan beef cattle breeders and each year a high percentage of the bulls are purchased by repeat buyers. Bulls have been purchased by commercial producers, seedstock breeders and A.I. organizations from Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, South Dakota and Washington. In 2012, 63 bulls sold for an average of \$3,093. This provides strong testimony to the effectiveness of the MCA/MSU Bull Evaluation Program.

Thanks to Our High Volume Bull Consignors over the Last 25 Years!

Firm Name	No. of Bulls
Michigan State Univ. (campus)	211
Bordner Angus Farm	102
MSU Lake City Exper. Station	74
Voogt Farms	73
Apple Hill Angus	65
Bourneman Farms	59
Hawkins Angus Farm	58
Dawson Angus Farm	52
Stough Simmental Farm	51
Plank Simmental Farm	50
Rottman Hereford Farm	47
Double C Simmental Farm	40
Endsley Charolais Farm	36
Barker Creek/Ventura Farms	33
Walnut Springs Farm	32
Reitberg Angus Farm	31
Harvey Farms LLC	28
Longacres Farm	27
Rich Beef & Grain Farms	26

Respondents* who "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" with the following statements:
 "The MCA/MSU Bull Evaluation Program has increased my knowledge and use of..."



*Survey of 2010-12 MCA/MSU Bull Evaluation Program bull buyers (n=46 responses)

Number of Bulls Sold and Average Sale Price 2000-2012

