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NALF NEWS

Commercial Awards Presented

The North American Limousin Foundation (NALF) presented its commercial marketing awards during the Limousin pen and carload shows at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS).

There were five nominees for Commercial Producer of the Year: English Family Farms, Iowa; Gerald and Jason Mootz, Iowa; Eastview Cattle Co., Minnesota; Hager Cattle Co., North Dakota; and Kessler Livestock, South Dakota. The Kesslers won, and you can learn more about their enterprise from the news release on the NALF Web site (www.nalf.org); the upcoming feature in the spring *Bottom Line* newsletter; or the March issue of *Limousin World*.

Coleman Limousin Ranch of Montana was the Commercial Marketing Booster of the Year and Wisconsin-based Strauss Brands received Limousin Promoter of the Year. Read more about them in the March issue.

Spring EPDs Available

Expected progeny differences (EPDs) from the spring 2009 international Limousin genetic evaluation are available on the NALF Web site.

You can use the Sire Selector to specify EPD-selection criteria in searching qualified U.S. and Canadian Limousin and Lim-Flex® bulls. The pedigree and EPD lookup allows you to search for information about a particular animal. The new EPDs also are available for animals listed for sale on the Limousin Exchange.

The site's "Genetic Evaluation" section includes the spring 2009 EPD statistics, percentiles and trends; sire summary qualifications; general sire listing; trait leaders; and downloadable sire summary. The NALF office also can mail a printed copy or CD-ROM version for \$10.

Active NALF members can view their whole-herd EPDs via the Web site's secured, members-only portion. They also can request EPDs from the NALF office *free of charge*. New performance records are available for \$2 per head or \$25 for a whole herd.

Limousin Exchange: Search, Sort, Select Your Seedstock

Find your future herd sires and replacement females with the Limousin Exchange Bull Listing Service and Females for Sale components on the NALF Web site. The services enable queries and sorts of Limousin and Lim-Flex bulls and females for sale from searchable databases.

When used with the site's member locator, the Limousin Exchange is an efficient way to find bulls and females that match your selection criteria. Registration and transfer fees make possible the growing number of Web-based services.

LimMark Tags Are Flexible Marketing Tool

Building the breed's brand equity includes gaining recognition for Limousin-influenced animals when they perform well in commercial settings. Thus, NALF offers the LimMark tagging program for feeder calves and replacement females so customers can couple reputable genetics with documented information.

Only qualified, properly enrolled cattle may wear LimMark tags. Producers first must complete a LimMark agreement and send it to NALF. Guidelines and the enrollment form are on the NALF Web site, or contact Frank Padilla in the NALF office.

Ownership Has Its Privileges

When you buy and transfer registered Limousin and Lim-Flex bulls, you gain access to NALF's programs, services and expertise. Registrations and transfers open the doors to technical support and marketing assistance for your next calf crop.

NALF helps commercial customers obtain top prices for their Limousin-influenced cattle. Services include complimentary subscriptions to NALF's *Bottom Line* newsletter, free use of the Web-based Limousin Exchange Feeder Calf Classifieds, and the opportunity to consign cattle to special feeder-calf sales.

Limousin breeders and their customers benefit from collaboration in collecting, submitting, processing and utilizing each other's performance data to facilitate dependable selections based on trustworthy EPDs. Buying, selling and transferring registered seedstock supports genetic progress and service after the sale.

Trust the Performance of Registered Animals

Adjusted weights and measures, ratios, and EPDs are critical for identifying profitmaking seedstock. One of NALF's primary functions is to use the best technology available to process data and provide reliable EPDs. Only registered Limousin and Lim-Flex animals have EPDs and accuracies computed through NALF's international genetic evaluation.

North American Limousin Foundation

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Insist on Authenticated Pedigrees

Documented, accurate pedigrees facilitate genetic management. They are essential for reaping the benefits of hybrid vigor (heterosis), managing inbreeding and calculating reliable EPDs.

NALF authenticates pedigrees through its DNA-based parentage-verification program. Highly propagated Limousin animals, including all bulls used in artificial insemination (AI), must have their sires and dams verified. Random tests check the accuracy of reported pedigree data for animals entering the herdbook.

Limousin has one of the most extensive parentage-verification programs in the beef industry to help ensure reliable and profitable selection.

Registration papers authenticate pedigrees, and credible EPDs appear on each registered animal's performance record. If profitable genetic management is important to you, look for registered bulls to ensure integrity.

Multiple-Trait Selection Is Best

Because weight affects net return, most progressive producers buy bulls with high levels of growth. To achieve that goal, NALF encourages producers to select Limousin and Lim-Flex seedstock with acceptable weaning- and yearling-weight EPDs.

When selecting for increased growth, producers also must balance genetics for other traits—including birth weight, calving-ease, calf survival, frame size, mature weight and maintenance-energy costs. Disciplined selection on both ends of the growth curve is required. High-ranking, high-accuracy EPDs for birth, weaning and yearling weights and direct calving-ease (CED) are the most powerful tools for improving growth and minimizing the potential for calving problems.

In addition, commercial producers should place selection pressure on improved carcass traits. The mainstream market most generously rewards carcasses that grade at least Choice and Yield Grade (YG) 2. Selection of Limousin and Lim-Flex bulls with above-average EPDs for both marbling and yield grade (or ribeye area) will help set the genetic stage to hit those targets.

Breeders Continue to Emphasize Docility

Calmer cattle are easier and safer to handle. They also offer better feedyard gains and meat quality.

Not only does the Limousin breed offer superior muscle-growth efficiency, but it also is the leader

toward improved docility. NALF developed the industry's first temperament-scoring system and docility EPD.

The NALF database shows a substantial increase in the proportion of calmer animals in recent years. Those scores provide the foundation for Limousin docility EPDs, which indicate genetic differences in the likelihood that offspring will inherit genes for calm behavior. Greater EPDs indicate higher likelihood for calm behavior in progeny, and greater accuracy values indicate more reliability. NALF advises producers to check the accuracy values for docility EPDs to assure prospective herd sires are from proven bloodlines for calm behavior.

Bull Semen Needed for Research

To date, University of Missouri-Columbia (MU) scientists have genotyped more than 1,200 registered Limousin animals, placing the breed in an excellent position to take advantage of the next step in genetic evaluation—genomewide selection (GWS).

MU still needs to genotype about 800 more animals with the best available EPD accuracies to build satisfactory molecular EPD-prediction models. Researchers are soliciting donations of one unit of semen from purebred or fullblood Limousin bulls, particularly those that have sired or will sire calves with carcass or ultrasound-scan data.

Visit http://animalsciences.missouri.edu/animalgenomics/sample_request.php on the Web or contact Jerry Taylor at 573/884-4946 for more information.

LIMS Proves Genetics

Herds enrolled in the voluntary Limousin Inventory Management System (LIMS) commit to annual reporting of complete calving and culling data. By submitting such comprehensive production information, they contribute to inventory-proven genetics with more accurate EPDs.

Participants pay an annual fee of \$15 per active cow and, in turn, can record performance for, register and transfer that year's calves. To enroll, click the "LIMS" button at the top of any page in the NALF Web site's secured, members-only portion. Breeders must enroll spring-calving cows by **February 15**.



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The year-letter code for 2009 is **W**