



Around THE WORLD

by Raymond Sprowl

As we roll into the new decade, many of you are in the midst of regrouping from stock shows, calving season, chopping ice and the consortium of endless duties required to keep things in order.

Amongst all the chaos of the everyday routine, we must also be planning for the spring breeding season that is quickly approaching. From my travels and the cattle I've seen so far, I'm impressed with the quality of bulls and females that will be offered this spring, either through sales or privately.

Now is the time to do your homework, needless to say that was not a regular occurrence for me through school. It is very important to understand and utilize Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs), performance data and pedigrees when making your buying and breeding decisions. This will help you target the next prospective herd sire or donor female that will hopefully make a positive impact in your herd.

Another critical issue that is gaining importance is trichomoniasis, a sexually transmitted disease caused by a long-lasting protozoan parasite that lives in the penile crypts of bulls.

Virgin bulls don't need to be tested, but older bulls that have been exposed to cows should be. Trich can decrease pregnancy rates by as much as 50 percent in cows, which would be disastrous to any breeder.

Similar to annual breeding soundness exams, regularly testing for Trich makes financial sense when compared to risking an entire calf crop. Infected bulls cannot be noticed visually, so they must be tested in order to determine their status.

Keeping these things in mind will help pave a smooth road for you in 2010. Stay warm and best wishes during the spring breeding and sale season. **LW**