



Around THE WORLD

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At the writing of this column, I have knocked the dust off the travel bag and have three of many fall sales under my belt. I hope these sales are an early indication of how good the fall sale season will be.

I attended the NALF board meeting back in August and received a hand-out from Dr. Tom Field of Colorado State University. It was the initial heifer pricing project for females, much like the one they did for bulls about a year ago. Even though it's not 100 percent complete and there weren't any big surprises, it is always interesting to see the numbers. It was based on information on 1,731 females sold from 1/8/05 to 5/20/06.

The information showed that females carrying the service of an AI sire were worth \$320 more than those bred naturally; those homozygous for the black trait were worth \$804 more than red females; and homozygous polled females brought a \$1,123 bonus over horned ones.

The results were much the same for EPDs. The females with .04 to .30 marbling EPDs brought \$451 more than those with the base EPD of -.28. The females with a 45 to 51 \$MTI EPD brought a \$522 bonus over the base EPD of 38 or lower.

I don't think there is anything too surprising about the fact these traits demanded a premium, but it is interesting to see the dollar figures are pretty substantial.

For many of us who grew up during an era when most of an animal's value was based on what it looked like, it is hard to get away from the old school way of thinking. I don't think there is anything that will take the place of an animal needing to be sound and having the information and body make-up to be productive and functional. However, reading through this report reminded me there are a lot of other factors that determine value other than what they look like and how they are bred. Keep in mind, this study did nothing to take into consideration the conformation or pedigree of the cattle.

That said, if you are looking to add value to the cattle you're producing, I think you should get a copy of this study and be aware of today's market. The key, as always, will be to breed cattle that have the right phenotype with as many of the traits your customers deem valuable as possible.

I look forward to seeing you at a sale in your area this fall. Be safe in your travels. **LW**