



# CONNECTION

Developing leaders through friendship, networking, and communication skills!

By Britney Beins, Deweyville, UT



## Sire Selection

As I walk through our bull battery, and take inventory of our semen tanks it amazes me the advancements we've made genetically within our own herd, as well as the great accomplishments made within the Simmental breed. My youngest sister, Aribella, loves to flip through the sire catalogs and probably knows more pedigrees than most 11-year-olds.

Two questions come to my mind when it is time for breeding season. How do I know I'm using the right bull? How important is bull selection for cattle operations? Bull selection on average, has a greater impact on the genetic improvement of a herd than most producers realize. Because the sire is most likely to produce a higher number of calves in his lifetime compared to a cow, a sire has the potential to contribute a larger portion of the genes to the herd. With the larger genetic contribution a sire makes to a herd of animals, it is important to manage the risk associated with the purchase of a new bull.

Fortunately, the level of risk associated with the selection of a new bull is manageable using well-planned breeding programs

and high-quality information. The amazing staff at the ASA registers hundreds, even thousands, of bulls (Simmental or other breeds) for our convenience and hybrid use every year. Not only do we have that resource, but we are able to do a planned mating to see which bulls would work best on your next donor, future show prospect, or perhaps that one cow that you know can get the job done, but know her progeny need some improvements in the "number" department.

For those of you who raise more than one breed, each breed association has developed programs that use performance information on a bull's relatives in addition to his own records to produce Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs). However, EPDs aren't the only thing you need to look at. Visual appraisal is a big part as well as your environment. For example, if you raise cattle in the South, you'd need a bull with more heat tolerance. Where we run our herd, it is steep, rocky, and in high elevation. We would need a bull that has more set and is fluid in his movement to stay sound.

We've come a long way genetically and phenotypically, we should know that bull selection is the foundation for building or maintaining a profitable herd. Sire selection can and should be more accurate today than ever before, so I ask you, are you using the right bull? ♦

2016 Classic Schedule		
Event	Dates	Location
South Central Regional	June 15-18, 2016	Stillwater, OK
Eastern Regional	June 15-18, 2016	Cookeville, TN
Western Regional	June 23-25, 2016	Bozeman, MT
National Classic	July 9-15, 2016	Des Moines, IA

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