



The GAR REPORT

November 2000

PROUD TO BE A FOUNDING MEMBER OF U.S. PREMIUM BEEF.

Editor's note: For some time now, Gardiner Angus Ranch has searched for a means to communicate more frequently with our customers. With electronic communication via email, fax, website, etc., the opportunities are many. Yet, the goal is to provide our customers current, timely, ongoing information to read at their leisure. Thus, the decision was made to develop a simple newsletter, mail to our current customers, as well as post the same information on the Gardiner website: www.gardinerangus.com.

The content of The GAR Report will focus on genetic and technological information as it relates to Gardiner Angus Ranch and beef industry and marketing opportunities.

We will include related articles developed by our friends and colleagues in the industry. If you have questions or concerns or specific issues that would be of interest to other cattlemen, feel free to submit the information for use at a later date.

The first article has been developed by Mark Gardiner and presented at several seminars and conferences this summer. Since many GAR customers are commercial cattlemen, we felt the information relevant and timely for inclusion in our first GAR Report.

"Reproductions, growth, carcass trait — can we have it all?" will be presented in two parts. The conclusion will appear in the December GAR Report.

GAR influence cattle sold through Superior Video Auction top Labor Day Sale

Gardiner customers were rewarded for their source verified GAR genetics recently at the Superior Video Auction Labor Day Sale. Twenty-five hundred head (2500) of GAR influenced cattle sold from \$3.00 - \$9.00 cwt premium above the 'same weight' market in the sale held September 6-9. GAR genetics have been a sponsored section of the video auctions for sometime now.

Since 1885



If you have industry related questions or specific issues that may be addressed in the GAR Report, please submit to:

GARDINER ANGUS RANCH

Rt. 1, Box 290
Ashland, KS 67831

Henry (316) 635-2932
Fax (316) 635-2930
Greg (316) 635-2752
Mark (316) 635-2760
Garth (316) 635-2361

email: gar@ucom.net
www.gardinerangus.com

Reproduction, growth, carcass traits — can we have it all?

Mark Gardiner
Gardiner Angus Ranch, Ashland, KS

This is a very easy question to answer. **Yes, we can have it all!**

Beef cattle production is easier today than any time in history. Reproduction has always been, and will always be the number one performance trait. Cattle must be given a job description. Job one is to reproduce. Cattle that do not reproduce must be eliminated. Cattle that do reproduce should then be selected for the economically-important traits.

In the past, the only selection pressure that could be applied was on reproduction. We did not have the information to change growth or carcass traits. Prior to the first American Angus Association Sire evaluation report published in the fall of 1980, we either made Angus cattle shorter or taller, but we did nothing to make a more efficient beef animal. Actually, as seedstock producers we are fortunate that commercial producers didn't sue us, because in reality the bulls we sold them only made their cows give milk — "cow fresheners". Prior to the Sire Summary we did nothing to change the genetics for growth, let alone produce a better beef product for consumers. Today, we can use genetic selection to create Angus cattle we thought were impossible to produce 20 years ago.

The American Angus Association has built a database that is the best in the world. I find it astonishing that even today there are Angus breeders who doubt the validity of this information. I find it even more amazing that some Angus breeders still do not use this information. I have heard it said that with all of the EPDs we have today, it is too complicated to sort it all out. The reality is, if breeders will look at EPD's as \$\$\$\$ (dollars), the sky is the limit on the opportunities that they represent.

When I was learning to use EPDs and database selection systems in the early 1980's, two of my mentors, Roy Wallace, and John Crouch, used to say, "Mark, you cannot have low birth weight, high growth, moderate-framed cattle because these are all antagonistic traits." What they meant by antagonistic traits was that in general, higher growth cattle tend to have larger birth weights and a larger mature size because of the positive correlation among growth traits. However, when cattle that defied these correlations were identified using the Angus database, it became possible to select them and to change the population. Now we can expand our use of those outlier bulls. This is our OPPORTUNITY, and is what has made the Angus breed what it is today and what it will be tomorrow.

A great way to demonstrate the power of the Sire Summary is to sort bulls using the Angus Association's database on the internet. (<http://www.angus.org/sireeval/index.html>). There are 2508 sires in the Spring 2000 Sire Evaluation Report. There are 13 traits listed in

the sire summary, and another 5 traits listed in the American Angus Association's preliminary Carcass Evaluation Ultrasound Report. I want to select a sire that is:

- (1) in the bottom 10% of the breed for birth weight - **SMALL AT BIRTH**,
- (2) in the top 1% of the breed for yearling weight - **FAST GROWING**,
- (3) bottom 15% of the breed for yearling hip height
- (4) in the bottom 40% of the breed for mature daughter weight - **MODERATE SIZE**,
- (5) in the bottom 15% for mature daughter height,
- (6) positive for scrotal circumference - **PRODUCTIVE**,
- (7) in the top 15% of the breed for REA - **HEAVILY MUSCLED**,
- (8) above average for % Retail Product - **HIGH YIELD**,
- (9) in the top 20% of the breed for intramuscular fat (% IMF) - **HIGH MARBLING**.

If you add up all of the bull calves born during the same time period that the 2508 bulls in the Sire Summary were selected, you would find that those bulls were selected from more than 2,500,000 bulls. So, how many bulls out of the 2,500,000 will fit my above criteria? There is ONE. The bull is Rito 616. I have to admit that I was not smart enough to find him until he had appeared in the Sire Summary. I'll bet you that the high school basketball coach who cut Michael Jordan from the basketball team, didn't realize what he had done until Michael Jordan had proven himself in the basketball arena. I found this bull because of our ability to measure, describe and identify Angus cattle. The secret in the Angus business is that we have the most powerful, accurate information source in the world: the Sire Evaluation Report. It is worth billions of dollars. You have this information at your fingertips, free of charge. **USE IT!!**

Having the best database in the world doesn't mean that there are no decisions to make when using EPDs. Every breeder still has to decide which traits are most important to him and his customers. In my mind today, it comes down to deciding the relative importance of selection for growth, carcass traits and reproductive efficiency.

Growth

Producers are paid for pounds. Gardiner Angus Ranch tries to breed for as many pounds as possible, provided we can produce those pounds in the correct package. To explain how we arrived at this breeding goal, I have to share a bit of our history with you.

Henry Gardiner started breeding registered Angus cattle in 1947. For 33 years Dad tried as hard as he possibly could to make genetic change. In 1964 he began using an intensive

artificial insemination (AI) program of theoretically the best bulls of the Angus breed. He was selecting bulls that looked good, or were a bull test station winner or a bull that was a purple ribbon winner. He became very frustrated because no matter how hard he tried to make genetic progress, it did not work!! The average weaning weights of our steer calves from 1964 to 1973 was 523 pounds. From 1974 to 1979, we creep fed our steers and also weaned them at earlier dates. Then in 1980 we returned to a comparable management of our steer calves and those calves still weighed 526 pounds. There had to be a better way. That better way was to establish the goals for our breeding program and to have the tools needed to reach those goals.

In the fall of 1980, Dad finally got the same tools that the dairy industry had used for many years, when the first Angus Field Data Report

(Sire Summary) was published. That was the first time all of the most widely used bulls of the breed had been compared for the economically-important traits. This allowed Angus breeders for the very first time to make sire selection based on genetic merit for the selected traits. Starting in December of 1980 we began to rely heavily on EPDs to select our sires. Most of the bulls we use we have never seen. However, we select only progeny proven sires that have sired hundreds, if not thousands, of calves. We have a total AI program. No clean up bulls are used. We started an extensive Embryo Transfer program in 1987. We currently breed over 1600 females per year and make about 2000 embryo transfers every year. Every animal on Gardiner Angus Ranch is the result of AI or ET.

(continued in the December issue)

Angus Beef Record Service (BRS) is valuable tool for commercial producers

The American Angus Association continues to make strides toward leading the beef industry in record keeping systems and collecting performance data. The Association's newest development is the Angus Beef Record Service (BRS), a system for keeping valuable records that are useful in decision making. The Angus BRS is a compliment to the Angus Herd Improvement Record (AHIR) program, and provides a mechanism for commercial producers to summarize their cattle performance records, which in turn can serve as a valuable tool to enhance profitability.



Rt. 1, Box 290
Ashland, KS 67831

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GAR customers receiving healthy premiums through U.S. Premium Beef

Long-time Gardiner customer, Steve Irsik, Kalvesta, KS, recently provided data on 458 head of ranch raised steers from GAR genetics, as well as 470 steers purchased from unknown genetics. The steers were sold through U.S. Premium Beef. The GAR influence steers had a 5.68 lb. dry matter conversion and a \$39.47 cost of gain in the feedlot. The net result on the rail was an impressive

more per head than purchased calves on U.S. Premium Beef's quality-based grid. They performed better in the feedlot — \$2.24/cwt. cost of gain advantage over the purchased calves. The additional revenue realized from both cost of gain savings and premiums paid back to the customer totalled over \$23,350.00!

If we can help in making your beef operation more profitable by supplying genetics

Angus Beef Record Service (BRS) cont.

The Angus BRS will compile information on a producer's cowherd, including breed composition, sire information, breeding information, calving data and any additional performance or carcass data collected on a calf. The Association will analyze the production data and report the information back to the individual producer. A genetic value will be developed for the cattle in terms of reproduction, growth, and end product merit, using the actual data submitted in addition to tying to the Angus database where possible.

In addition to collecting and processing data, the Angus BRS will provide producers a tool for source verification as well as national and electronic identification. These identification systems provide an information flow to improve quality management, facilitate domestic value-based marketing, and enhance access to export markets.

There is no cost to enroll a cowherd in the Angus BRS. A \$2 charge per calf weaning weight is assessed, and includes performance recording from conception to harvest, with summary reports throughout the production cycle. No software is necessary to participate. However, The Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) package currently used by registered Angus breeders will be adapted for use by commercial producers. Additionally, data can be submitted from other software packages or systems into Angus BRS.

For more information about Angus BRS or to request enrollment forms, contact the American Angus Association or Bill Bowman, director of Commercial Relations, at brs@angus.org or call (816) 383-5100.

On The Hoof

	No. Hd.	In Wt.	Out Wt.	Days	ADG	DM Con.	Cost/Gain
GAR	32	730	1,339	165	3.69	5.68	\$39.47
GAR	458	739	1,314	146	3.93	5.68	\$39.47
Purchased	470	796	1,343	139	3.93	6.08	\$41.71

On The Rail

Hot Yld %	Prime	Choice	CAB	YG1	YG2	YG3	Premium
65.23	24.77	90.50	44.11	2.58	18.98	78.44	\$100.66
64.37	12.41	87.13	35.39	1.49	15.07	73.86	\$64.30
64.31	1.52	64.86	22.41	2.52	44.05	50.00	\$26.18

\$64.30 per head premium paid to Irsik. However, after sorting the data from the top 32 head of GAR influence steers, the results were even more impressive. Over 90% graded Choice or better, 24.77% Prime and 44.11% qualified for CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF™. A \$100.66 premium per head was paid to Irsik for those steers. The 470 steers from unknown genetics had higher cost of gain and lower premiums paid on the carcasses.

The known genetics calves brought \$38.12

with proven predictability and profitability, give us a call.

We invite you to submit questions or industry related topics to be discussed in upcoming issues to Gardiner Angus Ranch.