

Bull Value Assessment Program - New Program - Fall 2018

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Kentucky has a beef cattle population of over 1 million head, ranks 3rd in the nation in cattle density and has a financial worth estimate of over \$1.5 billion. With a cow to bull ratio of 25:1 it requires 40,000 bulls to service the commonwealth's cow herd; considering a useful life of 4 breeding seasons over 10,000 bulls are purchased by Kentucky beef farmers annually. Approximately 75% of the genetics in a calf crop, when heifers are retained, comes from the bulls used over the past five years; reinforcing the point that proper bull purchases are critical to genetic and overall improvement. There are enormous consequences associated with purchasing a bull and introducing his genetics for both the calf crop to be marketed and the future cow herd, if replacements are being retained. The purpose of this educational program is to improve beef farmers' ability to purchase the correct bull for their management conditions, in a cost effective manner, and then manage the bull properly to facilitate reproductive success.

Matching genetics to management, breeding soundness exams, bull nutritional and health management and the economic considerations of each of these topics will be addressed by Extension professionals with expertise in each of these areas. Auctions can be intimidating events for small cattle producers and after making their purchases there is no measuring stick to determine if their purchase may actually lead to future financial gains or losses. A mock auction will be utilized to reinforce the key points made in the educational program and to provide teachable moments without actual financial risk.

The Bull Value Assessment Program is a two-part educational program. The first session will be formal classroom education using the modules described below. At the conclusion of the educational program each producer will be assigned one of five scenarios. Scenarios may include varying levels of base cow herd production, management and marketing strategies.

Participants will also receive a sales catalogue with the charge to research the bulls and determine which ones would be suitable in their assigned scenario. Videos of the bulls will be available online for viewing. Participants will return the following week for the second part of the program with the responsibility of buying a single bull to fit their assigned scenario. This session will be the "Mock Auction". Every attempt will be made to simulate a real auction. Producers can come early and view the bull videos and ask questions to the sales team. At the designated time the auction will begin and all bulls will be sold to the highest bidder while viewing the video of each bull.

Utilizing economic index selection methods, each bull will be assigned a value for each scenario. With economic indexes a bull that has extremely high value in one scenario may have a much lower value in a scenario that emphasizes other traits or has a different marketing scheme. Therefore, each bull will have a computed estimated value for each scenario.

At the conclusion of the sale the "sales team" will determine the relative value of each sale; this will be done by comparing the sale price against the determined value of each bull (i.e., if a bull is purchased for \$2500 and his computed value was \$3500 then that producers would have a plus \$1000 value; however, if that producer had paid \$4000 then they would have a minus \$500 value). The producer with the highest value purchase within each scenario will be recognized.

Session 1 Topics

- **Breeding Soundness Exams:** The importance of BSE, potential production and economic losses associated with undetected bull infertility and proper procedure for conducting BSE. Additional information will be provided on scrotal circumference verses service capacity and limitations on age of bull.

- **Bull Nutritional Management:** Nutritional management of bulls after purchase, during the breeding season and through the rest of the year.
- **Matching Genetics to Management:** Assessing resources, labor and nutrition, and determining what level of production is optimal for each case.
- **Targeting Selection for Specific Markets:** Identifying available markets and determining what traits should be targeted for selection.
- **Tools for Selection:** Techniques for selecting bulls, including specific information on understanding and using Expected Progeny Differences and implementing a crossbreeding program.

Five Regional Locations

This program will be offered at five locations across the state and will be limited to 50 producers per location. It is required to attend the first educational session in order to participate in the sale the following week. A light meal will be served at each program session. It is important to note that all material will be consistent across locations and sessions will begin at 6:00 pm local time.

Western KY

- Hopkins County Extension Office
- Session 1: October 9
- Session 2: October 16

Central KY

- Madison County Extension Office
- Session 1: October 11
- Session 2: October 18

South Central KY

- Barren County Extension Office
- Session 1: October 22
- Session 2: October 29

North Central KY

- Shelby County Extension Office
- Session 1: October 23
- Session 2: October 30

Eastern KY

- Session 1: November 1 (Fleming-Mason Energy Auditorium)
- Session 2: November 8 (Fleming County Extension Office)

The cost to attend the program is \$25 per individual. This will include dinner at both sessions along with all program materials. Space is limited to 50 individuals per location and will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. To register and to secure your spot for any location, please email Ben Crites at benjamin.crites@uky.edu. Additionally, registration is available online by visiting <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/university-of-kentucky-cooperative-extension-16891600267>. If you have any questions or would like more details on the program, please contact Ben Crites (benjamin.crites@uky.edu) or Dr. Darrh Bullock (dbullock@uky.edu) or your local ANR Extension Agent (april.wilhoit@uky.edu | 606.845.4641).