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Livestock and Natural Resources

### **Not Polite to Talk About Politics or Religion in Mixed Company**

When I grew up there were some taboo subjects for mixed company, mostly Politics and Religion. It just wasn't a good idea to express your opinion on either. Today, with our social media ever present, there is no taboo. It's a lot to take in. Social media is not a fad, I watched a video that said if Facebook were a country, it was third largest in population, just before the United States. I have a note posted on my desk that says, "Before you send, you need to THINK! T is for, is it TRUE? H stands for is HELPFUL? I stands for is it *INSPIRING*, N is, is it NECESSARY? And the K is for, is it KIND? Maybe if all in social media would use THINK, we wouldn't have "fake news" or "alternative facts". Just saying.... The facts are: EPD's can change your herd! EPDs offer beef producers a tremendous opportunity to improve genetics within their herds. Since the majority of the genetic progress within a herd is a direct result of sire selection, EPDs should be given careful attention when choosing bulls. With the vast number of EPDs that are available for use, selection goals must be carefully established to determine which EPDs are of primary importance. Additionally, EPDs should be combined with other selection criteria, including structural and reproductive soundness, to determine which sires are most suitable for the operation.

Expected progeny differences (EPDs) provide estimates of the genetic value of an animal as a parent. Specifically, differences in EPDs between two individuals of the same breed predict differences in performance between their future offspring when each is mated to animals of the same average genetic merit. EPDs are calculated for birth, growth, maternal, and carcass traits and are reported in the same units of measurement as the trait (normally pounds). EPD values may be directly compared only between animals of the same breed. In other words, a birth weight EPD for a Charolais bull may not be directly compared to a birth weight EPD of a Hereford bull (unless an adjustment is made to account for breed differences). There are charts available to do Across Breed EPD comparisons. These are readily available on the internet, let me know if you need one.

EPDs are reported by most major beef breed associations, and are calculated using complex statistical equations and models. These statistical models use all known information on a particular animal to calculate its EPD. This information includes performance data on the animal itself, information from its ancestors (sire and dam, grandsire, great grandsire, maternal grandsire, etc.), collateral relatives (brothers and sisters), and progeny (including progeny that are parents themselves). In short, virtually all performance data that relate to the animal of interest are used to calculate its EPD. These performance records are adjusted for such factors as age and sex of the animal, and age of the dam prior to inclusion in EPD databases. These adjustment factors allow performance records to be fairly compared in the analysis. Additionally, genetic merit of mates is accounted in evaluating progeny information. Therefore, progeny records are not influenced by superior or inferior mates. The statistical analysis used for EPD calculation also accounts for the effects of environment (nutrition, climate, geographical location, etc.) that exist between herds. These environmental effects can be estimated due to the widespread use of artificial insemination. Through AI, the same bull can be used in several herds across the country. These common sires create genetic links between herds with differing environments and serve as the foundation for evaluation of performance data and EPD calculation across herds. For these reasons, animals with published EPDs within a breed may be directly compared regardless of their age and origin. Finally, the genetic relationships that exist between various traits are also considered in the EPD calculations

David Hallauer, Agent  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Crop and Soils, Horticulture

### **Weed Control Meetings – February 22 & 24**

It goes without saying that a weed allowed to compete with a growing crop is going to affect yield. How much?

A 2008 Iowa State study in corn under heavy weed pressure might provide some insight. They created differing periods of weed competition, implementing control at the V2, V4, and V5 growth stages (22, 36, or 43 days after planting) as compared to a weed-free treatment that included a pre-emerge herbicide program followed by a post program. By measuring corn shoot biomass at the time of the post emerge application, they found large differences in the amount of biomass lost from the differing application timings. A 10 percent reduction in biomass at V2 increased to 70 percent by V4. While the applications at V2 and V4 allowed for decent yield 'recovery' (losses were limited to five and 12 percent), waiting an additional week to the V5 stage resulted in a 63 percent increase in lost yield compared to application at the V4 stage.

We know that to be true. What challenges our weed control systems is how to design a weed control program to avoid these losses! That's the goal of the Meadowlark Extension District Weed (Control) Week 2017 coming up on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Curtis Thompson, K-State Research and Extension Weed Specialist will be our guest on Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> to focus on corn weed control programs. Dr. Thompson will discuss new corn herbicides as well herbicide systems to help reduce weed pressure and herbicide resistance. We'll kick off the morning with light refreshments in the small meeting room of the Nemaha County Community Building in Seneca at 9:45 AM followed by Dr. Thompson's presentation from 10:00 – 11:00 AM. Dr. Thompson will be available for a question and answer session after the meeting as well.

Soybean Weed Control will be the focus on Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup> at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Nortonville. Dr. Dallas Peterson, K-State Research & Extension Weed Specialist will speak from 10:00-11:30 AM on new products in soybean weed control, including Xtend soybeans and management of the new dicamba formulations available. Come early for refreshments at 9:45 AM!

RSVP is *not* required, but is helpful to make insure adequate meeting materials. Please RSVP by noon on Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup> to any Meadowlark Extension District Office or via e-mail to [dhallaue@ksu.edu](mailto:dhallaue@ksu.edu) . Hope to see you there!

Cindy Williams, Agent  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Food and Nutrition, FNP

Out of Town

Nancy Nelson, Agent  
Meadowlark Extension District  
Family Life

### Deep Clean in the Deep Freeze

With the cold weather outside, it's a good time to clean the freezer. It's important to keep the freezer clean of frost and food debris. Here are some tips from Michigan State University Extension for cleaning and maintaining your freezer:

- Remove all frozen food items.
- Check items for expiration dates and for freezer burn.
- Consider throwing out any food that appears old and dried out. It may still be safe to eat, but the quality may be poor. Ice crystals on the inside of packages may indicate thawing and refreezing—those packages may need to be thrown out. Frozen food can be stored up to 1 year.
- Pack food items you are keeping in another freezer or a cooler until you can return them to the freezer.
- Wipe down the freezer with one tablespoon of baking soda in one quart of water. Then wipe with clean water before turning the freezer back on.
- Let the freezer cool down for about 30 minutes before placing the frozen items back into it.
- Put a freezer thermometer near the door of the freezer and check it periodically. Adjust the temperature control as needed to keep foods at or below 0°F.