

Buying a Bull: For Sale NOT on Sale

Allison Brown, Livestock Agent, Alexander County

For cattlemen, buying a bull should be a well thought out purchase. Selecting and purchasing a bull for your beef herd could be one of the most important decisions you make in your operation. Herd bulls should only be purchased from a reputable source. Using a bull with poor performance and a weak genetic base could delay improvements in your herd for several years. The expense you have in purchasing a bull is the difference between the purchase price of the new bull and the salvage value of the old bull. This investment will add efficiency and profitability to your herd for years to come.

Example 1. Cost of a bull purchase

\$3000 Purchase Price of New Bull

2090 Salvage Value of Old Bull (1900 lbs. X1.10 lb.z0

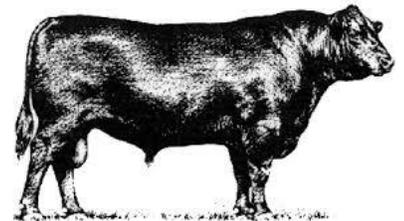
\$ 910 Net Cost of New Bull

If the new bull sires 90 calves over the next 3-5 years, $\$910 \div 90 = \10.11 cost/ calf. If the bull sires 90 calves that are 10 pounds heavier at weaning and they sell for \$1.09/lb. (3-year average for 500-pound calves – GA Auction Markets, 2009-2011) at weaning, you will have paid for the bull.

You may think that the purchase price of a bull may seem high at a glance; however, the expense becomes relatively small when you spread it across your bull's calf crop for a three to five-year period. The herd bull makes a tremendous impact on your future calf crops and herd genetics for many years (replacement heifers).

Where to Buy a Bull

- Buy from a breeder whose integrity is above reproach.
- Buy from someone who has performance records on his cattle, and knows what those records mean.
- Buy from a place where you know the type of management under which the bulls were produced.
- Buy bulls from test stations where all records are available.
 - **Union County Performance Tested Bull Sale – December 3, 2016**
 - **Butner Bull Test Sale – December 16, 2016**
 - **Waynesville Bull Test Sale – January 7, 2017**
- Buy bulls from performance oriented producer sales.
- Buy bulls from breed association sponsored sales.



Bull To Cow Ratio

Management also has a big impact on the bull to female ratio. Management sets the length of the breeding season and influences health of the bull, both reproductive and structural soundness and care during the breeding season. However, the “rule-of-thumb” for the proper bull to female ratio is one cow per month of age of the bull up to 3 years of age. For example, a 15-month old bull could be run with 15 females and 36 cows could be exposed to a 3-year old bull (36 months of age), thirty six cows is the maximum number that should be allotted to a mature bull.

Reference to brand names or commercial services is for educational information only and should not be construed as an endorsement of the product or services by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service or discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned.

North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.

Extension

November, 2016

Cattle Call



Wilkes NC State Extension, 416 Executive Dr. Suite B, Wilkesboro, NC 28697 PHONE: 336.651.7348 FAX: 336.651.7516

Preparing for Breeding Season

John Cothren, Livestock Agent, Wilkes County

As many producers wrap up calving season, it's time to switch gears and start thinking about next year's calf crop. Here are seven things to put on your pre-breeding checklist:



1. Don't forget the breeding soundness exam

Be sure to have a veterinarian conduct a breeding soundness examination to ensure that your bull's battery is ready to get to work.

2. Purchase semen

If you're planning to artificially inseminate (AI) cows and heifers, it's time to pour over those semen catalogs and select the genetics you want to incorporate into next year's calf crop.

3. Choose your artificial insemination breeding protocol

Do you plan to synchronize your cows for artificial insemination? If so, which breeding protocol do you plan to follow?

4. Evaluate body condition scores

Make sure your cows are in good breeding shape and supplemental feed any heifers or lactating cows that might need a little extra help getting there.

5. List mating's for pastures

When it's time to haul pairs to pasture, it's important to note the grazing capacity of each pasture, which bull you plan to have where, and which cows will be the best mating for each bull or group of bulls you plan to expose them to.

6. Purchase pre-breeding vaccines

If you work your cow-calf pairs before turnout time, now is a great time to check in with your veterinarian (maybe when he comes out to conduct the breeding soundness exams on your bulls) and purchase any pre-breeding medicines and de-wormers.

7. Fix fences, check water sources

Before turnout for the breeding season, it's important to double check that your fences survived the summer storms and are in good working order. Check your water sources to make sure tanks are in working order or cattle have access to fresh water. Add an electric fence, if needed, to keep your bulls in and the neighbors' bulls out.