

Behind the static, 560-lb. weaning weights

by Justin Sexten, former Director of Supply Development for Certified Angus Beef LLC

It looks like weaning weights have gone pretty much nowhere for 15 years. That's according to a summary of North Dakota State University's Cow Herd Appraisal of Performance Software (CHAPS) that presents genetic progress as functionally static since 2003. I couldn't miss that summary. It was well-publicized and pointed out by just about every contact and source I know.

Static being a relative term – there were fluctuations in the data – weaning weight hovered around 560 pounds (lb.), weaning age was 193 days and average daily gain was 2.5 lb. Seeing the flat trends, author Kris Ringwall suggests genetic progress in the commercial cow-calf sector is “mature.”

The topic came up during a “bull-pen session” at the Range Beef Cow Symposium in Cheyenne, Wyo., in December, where the discussion suggested the beef industry has gone astray, utilizing growth genetics while failing to increase weaning weight but driving cow size up.

Well, some of that rings true. A rise in cow mature weight is evidenced by the increasing yearling weight

expected progeny difference (EPD) in all major breeds. Combine that with a steady increase in fed-cattle carcass weights for more than 15 years and the idea that weaning weight remains static seems to defy logic.

CHAPS is not alone in documenting the static trend. David Lalman at Oklahoma State University summarized several data sets across the country with similar results at Cattlemen's College® last year.

How do weights at one sector level off while growing steadily at another? Genotype and environment combine to produce a phenotype. Across the beef industry, genotypic growth potential has certainly grown, as all segments demanded. Virtually no one aims to go backward, in genetics or any other production technologies.

But how many cow-calf producers aspire to participate in any other segment? To the extent that number remains static, weaning weights appear static. Genetic progress

continued on page 4



1600 lb. cow = needs to wean
800 lb. calf to wean 50%

1250 lb. cow = needs to wean
625 lb. calf to wean 50%

Your Mileage May Vary



by James Henderson

On May 31, 2019, the American Angus Association (AAA) updated a couple of EPD's (Mature Weight and Dry Matter Intake), updated the way \$B is calculated and added two new \$ indexes (\$ M for maternal index and \$C for combined index). This makes AAA's EPD's and \$ indexes that were already the best in the industry, even better. Cattlemen using AAA's tools have the best guides available to improve the performance of their cattle.

However, the most important thing you can do is have a plan!

Ask yourself questions such as:

- **Where do I want to go with my cows and their resulting calves?**
- **What is the environment my cows are working in?**
- **What size do I want my cows to be at maturity?**
- **Are my calves going to be part of a supply chain or just a commodity?**



There are many more questions to ask yourself, but as you begin your journey remember where to start and a couple of basic rules:

1. *Single trait selection or too much emphasis on one trait will nearly always get you in trouble down the road!*

2. *All EPD's are not equal! It is important to remember the EPD's from different breeds start with different basis and emphasize different traits. Additionally, cattle from the same breed but from different environments than yours may not have the same response in your environment.*

3. *As my Dad always said, success will come if you plan your work and work your plan!*

If you have questions about your plan, give me a call and I will try to help you ask yourself all of the pertinent questions. One question you may want to research is just how big are my cows? The USDA research center in Clay Center, Nebraska tells us that on average, today's Angus cow is the largest beef cow in the world. Let that soak in for a minute. Let's remember that an animal unit is based on a **1000# cow**. That says that a **1200# cow** is 1.2 animal units and a **1500# cow** is 1.5 animal units. That tells us that to stay even if a 1000 # cow weans a 500 # calf a 1500 # cow has to wean an 815 # calf. In our run to chase big, we have made big cows with big costs We now have

new tools, \$M and revamped EPD's for mature weight and dry matter intake that will give us better insight into the plan for our cows.

Now we can make a plan for our cows. Which cows do we want our replacements to come from? Let's build a plan that will give you the best replacement for your environment and pick bulls that will provide you that opportunity. You may then want to breed the remainder of your cows to terminal bulls that will give you the best opportunity to market calves that will best fit the feeder and the packer. Those decisions will help transition you from being a price taker to a price maker.

The days of just raising commodity cattle are rapidly leaving us. The future will make all of us fit into some sort of supply chain. Does your plan include being part of a supply chain? When we owned B3R Country Meats, we built one of the first supply chains in the beef industry. We understand what it takes to be a part of such a program and how the tools available today can help you get there.

As we look toward this year's bull sale, we are excited about the bulls we will be offering. They will be finishing up their grass gain test in a couple of weeks and we will be bringing them home to begin their feed gain test. We will once again be prepared to provide you the most extensive set of data available on any bulls you can purchase. If you have your plan built, let us direct you toward bulls that will fit your plan. If your plan is not complete, let us help you determine a course that will fit your operation and lifestyle. Picture of moving bulls or bulls on grass

Remember that tools are just guides and that your mileage may vary! Let us help you get the most mileage you can from your cattle plan. 3



COWBOY WISDOM!

THANK YOU for a great 2019 Sale!

Bradley 3 Ranch has spent 61 years bringing innovative ideas to their bull buyers with 2019 being no exception. A pre-sale record crowd was given a presentation about the American Angus Association's new commercial feeder calf program called Angus Link. Chris Engel director of the program from St. Joseph, Missouri was on hand to present the program and answer questions.

Bidders from 12 states purchased bulls in the sale. When the final gavel fell, 181 Angus Bulls had sold for an average of \$5,184. Top selling bull was a Yon Final Answer son out of a B3R Electorate daughter presented as Lot 1. He sold for \$22,000 and went to repeat buyer ABS Global. Lot 1 when scored by Zoetis for their All-Purpose Index was in the top ? of 1 percentile. Lot 55 was the second-high selling bull at \$15,000 and is headed to California. Lot 10 sold to a repeat B3R buyer in Texas for \$13,500.

The Charolais offering was the largest ever at Bradley 3 Ranch as 65 bulls averaged \$4,858. Top selling Charolais bull was Lot 224; B3R Ring Da Bell 813 that sold for \$7,500 to a Texas Buyer. Second high Lot was Lot 223 going to a repeat buyer in Idaho for \$7,000.

It was another great day for Bradley 3 Ranch as 246 bulls sold for an overall average of \$5,098.

Make your plans now for February 15, 2020, the date for the next Wide Body Sale! 3



At the ranch, on the road and in the news...



B3R Landslide E197 • Reg#: 19084304

Thank you to ABS Global for their purchase of B3R Landslide E197. His balanced EPD package and phenotype will compliment their offering.



Thanks to Bill Cornell and his team from ABS Australia for their visit!

James speaking at TSCRA's Ranching 101...

we appreciate TSCRA's efforts to host these events and the TSCRA Gatherings around the state.



continued from page 1

aside, two aspects of this “static” equation remain constant in most operations that govern this progress.

The environment for those genetics limit their expression at the commercial cow-calf level, lush environments less so than herds restricted by that governor. Keep in mind environment is no physical location. Differences in your pasture or range management offer differing nutrients; abundant and restricted supplies can exist across a fence.

Lalman has shown data where each extra pound of weaning weight requires 27 lb. more dry matter for the cow to make sufficient milk to increase weight gain. That causes some to suggest we should reduce growth potential in all cattle to accommodate the ranch environment, the least-common nutrient denominator. However, challenges arise when we realize the required efficiencies for greater gain in the nutrient-rich environments further down the supply chain.

That’s where the second aspect of the equation is often ignored. The CHAPS summary notes that these static and historical weights are matched with a historically static marketing program. It’s a program where least and greatest growth potential are typically sold to the next user rather than retained to capitalize on genetic investment.

Imagine the growth you could capture at the ranch level if the same 27 lb. of dry matter the cow needs to increase weaning weight were fed to calves after weaning. Even at a poor 9-to-1 feed conversion, you could triple the calf gain compared to feeding it through the cow. Backgrounding calves at the ranch rather than selling your genetic potential at weaning offers not only improvements in nutrient-use efficiency but marketing options of retained ownership or selling weaned, preconditioned calves.

Backgrounding enterprises may not fit every ranching operation, but cattle selected for limited growth don’t fit in any postweaning feeding operation. When you don’t retain ownership, you must sell to one of those.

As heifers are kept back and sires are purchased this year, look for those that continue to match the ranch environment while offering the next owner upside potential. The tools available to make such decisions have never been more available.

If you want to understand how important upside potential beyond the ranch can be, try setting up a new enterprise where you are the next owner.

Editor’s Note: Justin Sexten is former Director of Supply Development for Certified Angus Beef LLC.

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Customer Success Stories...

REAL MONEY!

Superior Rep., John Henderson who represents cattle in GA and AL, called with a great report of Bradley 3 Ranch sired feeder calf success in the Week in the Rockies sale. His customer, Jackson Farms, has AI’ed to our B3R Pioneer Wave Y409 bull because of his ability to consistently stamp his calves with large ribeyes and lots of marbling. They sold 134 head of 725 weight calves for \$1.70 and one load weighing 850 pounds at \$169.50! That’s \$1440.75 / head on average! WOW! Congratulations to all involved!!

WC UB Fortress 322F...

...was recently named Grand Champion Ultra Black bull at the 2019 Brangus Futurity in Texarkana, TX. He was also Reserve Grand Champion at the International Brangus Show earlier this year in Houston. The bull’s dam is an Angus female purchased in our 2016 Heifer Sale! She is a granddaughter of our dominant X202 cow who also happens to be the mother of ABS Global’s A229 bull. We appreciate the folks at Wyman Creek Brangus and wish them luck with their Ultra Black/ Brangus program in Missouri.



WC UB Fortress 322F

We want to hear from you!
Send us picture and stories about your opportunities and success stories with Bradley 3 Ranch genetics.

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Mary Lou Bradley-Henderson, (940) 585-6471

James Henderson, (940) 585-6171

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Mugged for 50 cents!

It was in the 1970's and things were tough for all ranchers, especially the cow- calf man. The cow-calf guys had to depend on a commodity market that had been hovering at a lot lower than break-even prices for several years. During 1965 the average price per pound was \$20.00 for a 400-450 pound weaned calf and had actually risen to \$35.00 by 1967. Even so, with all the debt so many of us were carrying and being droughty all through the years, more farmers and ranchers were being forced off their land. 1965 marked our tenth year on the ranch and records showed no one had lasted more than 9 years on this particular piece of country. We woke every morning wondering if we would be next in losing our dream of ranching.

Everyone was holding on to their old pickups and most had gotten to the point that it was going to take more than a pair of pliers and bailing wire to keep them running! A young man we knew in Wellington had completed mechanic's school and had opened up a shop. We believed in him and had begun to trust he could keep us up and running.

We had taken my "Sunday Go To Meeting Truck" over to Billy for a tune up and it was always fairly clean. But the second one needs no explanation, as it was the "ranch work truck". And most of you understand it may contain any and every thing, and none of it clean!

The morning Billy had told me my pickup would be ready I was told to take the ranch pickup and see if he could do anything for it. The old pickup had decided on its own, when and if it would run, much like day hands of today. There was no such thing as a cell phone, so I asked if I could make it to Wellington and Bill and Big Dave assured me someone would stop and help me get into town!

I did make it to Wellington and rolled into Billy's shop to learn "Sunday" was about an hour or so from being ready. I sat in the little foyer and got to thinking how nice it would be if I tried to get it washed. I thought the ole' pickup could sure use a little sprucing up and perhaps keep clods of dirt from falling into the fellow's eyes when working under it.

I realized I didn't have one red cent in my pocket! But the lights came on and I thought surely there was some change in the ashtray. I found some nickels, dimes and pennies but not enough for a 50-cent wash. But I kept looking, knowing there just gotta be some change under the floor mats and

perhaps under the seats! All in all, I came up with 50 needed cents.

Before getting to the fellow who I learned lived on the other side of the tracks and would wash your pickup for my 50 cents, I saw a sign that read automatic car wash for 50 cents. It looked as if it was made from old used corrugated iron but I had never been to an automatic washer. I thought, how cool! And I turned around and drove into one of the two stalls, got out to read directions and the machine said **QUARTERS ONLY**. Up ahead, I saw one of those new Allsups Convenience Stores. I drove in and got out, and a sign read open 24 hours a day. That was unheard of in those days. The cashier was very nice and exchanged my pennies for two quarters so I was now ready for a new an unexpected experience.

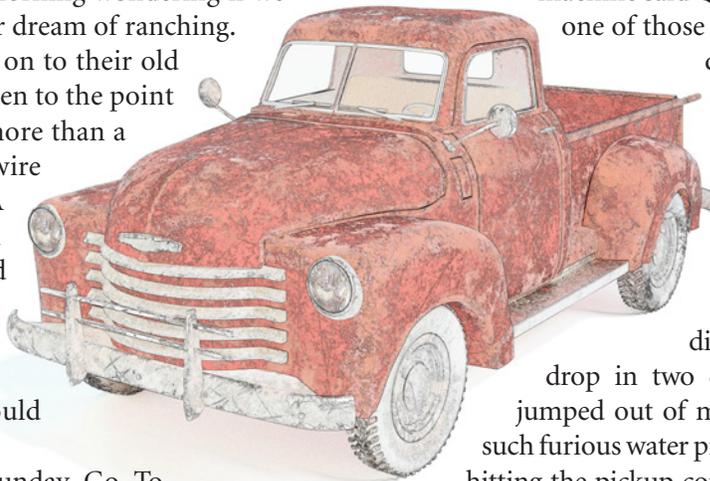
I drove into the car wash, as directions said, remove wand and drop in two quarters. When I did, the wand jumped out of my hand and I had never witnessed such furious water pressure. The wand went up in the air hitting the pickup coming back around hitting me from all directions. I was determined to catch it, but it continued to whack me on each round, it had my money and I wanted to command where and how it was spent!

How long the battle lasted I do not know, but I was one drenched ole' gal! There was blood and mud flowing from my head but finally got the fifty pennies used up. Thankfully, no one was around as I must have been a sight for sore eyes. Finally, I thought about an old tee shirt we used to check oil that was under the seat. So I got it out and tried my best to try to clean up a little. But grease, mud and blood didn't seem to mix well in my hair, on my face and arms. I couldn't find a comb in glove box, but did find a currycomb. The little side mirrors had been knocked off by the brush and when I tried to clean the rearview mirror, with the now muddy bloody tee shirt, I really fixed it! So, I had no way to see what I looked like, but knew it wasn't a pretty picture.

Believing Billy was wondering where I was, I drove back to his shop to find "Sunday" still not in front. I went in the foyer and just got seated when Billy came through the door, he began to scream "*OH MY-----, she's been MUGGED!*" Before I could say anything he yelled for his helper to call



by Minnie Lou Bradley



continued on page 7

Herd recordkeeping goes mobile

That's one of the benefits of today's modern, technological world. You don't necessarily need to remember where you left your Black Book, as long as you can remember where you put down your cell phone. The Angus Black Book is now available as a mobile application or app. Plus, it will work whether one has cell service or not.

The Angus Black Book app was built with commercial cattlemen in mind. The app is an online recordkeeping toolbox. Better yet, you can provide access to everyone on your cattle operation to ensure that all pertinent information is collected.

To get your mobile version of the Angus Black Book app, visit the App Store or Google Play to download Angus Black Book. Once you download the Black Book on your phone, take a minute to visit the web portal at www.angusblackbook.com. This site will give you an overall view of the Black Book's capabilities, including how to upload cattle effortlessly via a spreadsheet for a more in-depth user experience.



While it's a mobile device, it will work without cell service as it can function offline. Once you get back to the house and have cell service again, you simply hit the Sync Now button at the bottom of your screen to upload the most recent data.

Finally, the Dashboard within the Angus Black Book has a number of important features, including Animal Search. Simply type in a registered Angus sire's name or registration number to view that animal's pedigree, expected progeny differences (EPDs) and other available data from the American Angus Association. The

Operations in Progress tab keeps you up-to-date on activities that need to be completed. There's even a Calving Overview section that allows you to track all of your new calves within the Dashboard, while the web portal allows for reports to be printed or shared via email.

Maybe the most important piece of information, is that the Angus Black Book mobile app is free! 3

THE NEW F WORD ... FESCUE



We plan to plant endophyte free fescue a cool season grass instead of winter wheat in part of our wheat field... reason for attempting this is for a cool season forage that if it survives, we can reduce cost of planting each year and still have some cool season forage. We are on the edge of moisture line so we will just have to see. Speaking of moisture, we have had almost 13 inches this Year! Yep—you heard it correctly, but the timing of the rains has been really good. We are in the land and livestock business. 3

2020 Charolais bull offering

We will be offering another large number of Charolais bulls this year. We will have 98 head moving to the headquarters from our grass gain test in a couple of weeks. We are excited as this will be the largest set of Charolais bulls we have ever offered. Most of these bulls will be in the top of the breed for Charolais EPD's.

We will once again genomically test all of the Charolais bulls so that you can be assured to have the best performance information as well as accurate pedigrees. This year the American International Charolais Association (AICA) made the decision to update their EPD's 6 times per year. This should give you the buyer more confidence in the accuracy of the EPD's you are using to select bulls. AICA has contracted with Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) to do the computing of their EPD's. AGI computes millions of EPD's each week for the American Angus Association as well as numerous other US breed associations and International breed associations as well.

Bradley 3 Ranch intends to be on the leading edge of utilizing the best most current methods of predicting performance that is available to us. We have Charolais Bulls because we know that many producers enjoy utilizing heterosis to improve their performance. Heterosis that comes with the use of cross breeding cattle. We also have had a lot of experience with feeding and harvesting Charolais cross cattle. We know that in the feedyard and the packing house these cattle will exhibit performance that will please both segments of the supply chain.

We have also selected cattle that are docile naturally and we are in them daily on foot, on 4-wheeler and horseback so they are accustomed to any method of handling that you may incorporate in your operation.

Let us help you to incorporate Charolais bulls into your plan for producing profitable calves from your cow herd. 3



continued from page 5

an ambulance, and police! I began telling Billy I was OK and hadn't been mugged. He came over placed his arms around me and said, "Minnie Lou, you are in bad shape and you don't really know what has happened." You are in need of professional help. He assured me the ambulance would soon arrive to take me to the hospital and the police and all of Wellington would capture the sorry person who had attacked me. I kept pleading trying to tell him what had really happened and as the sheriff and ambulance sirens were bearing down. And Billy said, "If your story was true, you would have shutoff the water at the sign reading STOP?" Was I to admit my stupidity or leave it on the police blotter as Wellington's unsolved crime? 3



Females For Sale

Small group of experienced bred cows for sale and a nice offering of bred Angus heifers for sale. These experienced bred cows have stood the test of time and earned the right to stay in our herd. Now, it's your opportunity to own them and add their proven genetics to your herd. For more info on either group, contact Mary Lou.

Bull Sale

In our 2020 sale we will start with Angus bulls then sell Charolais bulls then sell females. You are welcome to come in advance of the sale and walk thru the bulls and get comfortable with and over all plan. We always prefer you to be here on sale day, but we understand life happens so wanted to extend the invitation to come in advance of the sale and go thru the bulls to work on a sale plan without the pressure of the sale crowd. Last year we had numerous folks set aside part of a day to come over and just spend time with the bulls.

Q & A

- With USDA making a decision on official identification for the future, what are we going to do? Yes all the bulls have had and will continue to have RFID tags along with visual tags.
- Are the Charolais bulls DNA tested and does this matter? Yes, we DNA test all the Charolais bulls, we want to confirm parentage and give you the customer all the tools available to make your buying decisions.

Upcoming Events

Nov. 7-10, 2019 – Working Ranch Cowboys Association
World Champion Rodeo Finals,
Amarillo TX

Dec. 11-12, 2019 – New Mexico Stock Growers Association
Convention, Albuquerque, NM

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Don't miss this opportunity to add Bradley 3 Ranch genetics to your herd! These foundation building heifers are the kind that have kept us in business for 60+ years.



The
W W I D E
BODY *Sale*

February 15, 2020 • 12 Noon

at the ranch, east of Estelline, Texas

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90+ Charolais Bulls
50+ Ready to breed Heifers



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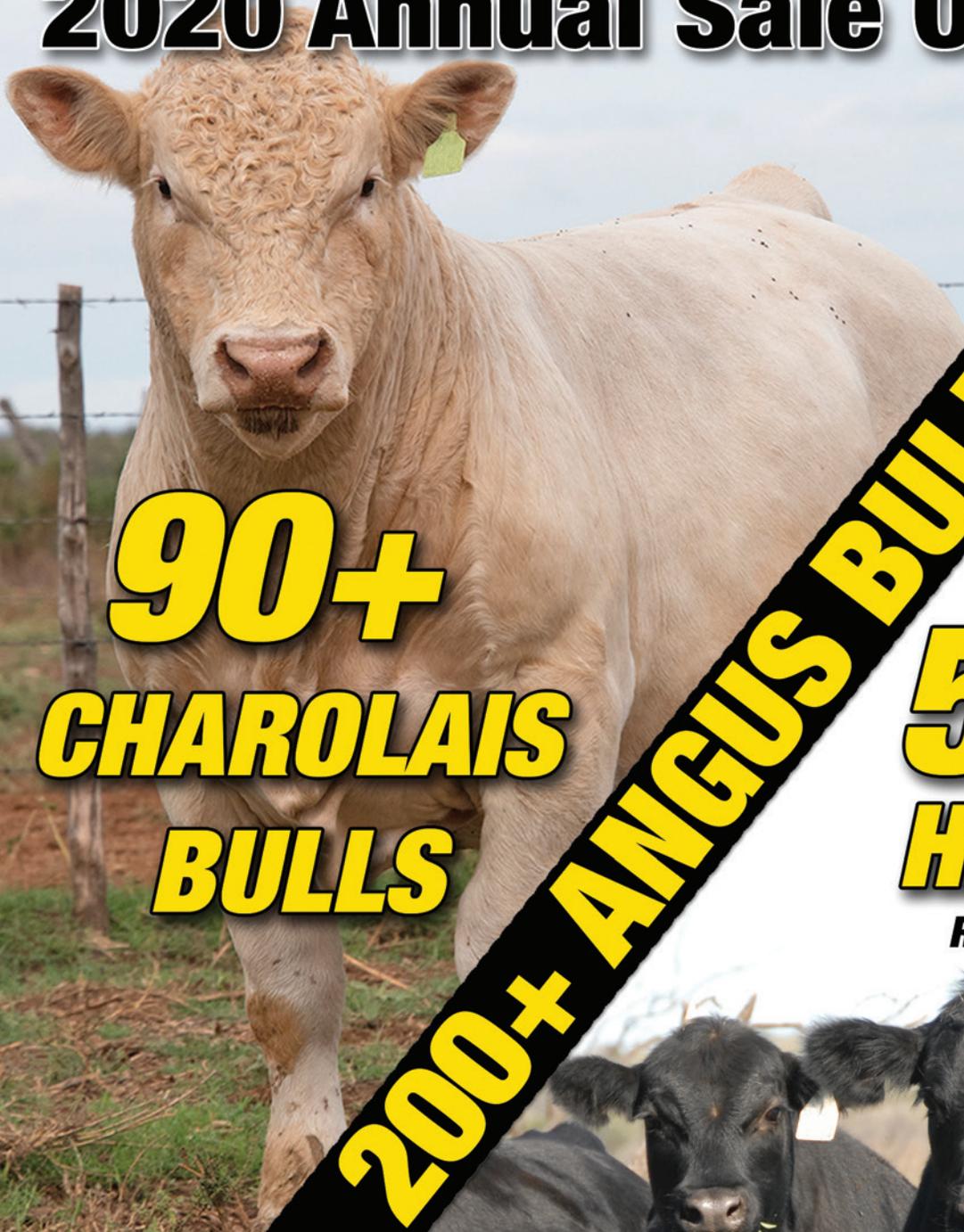
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