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BAA Releases Residual Feed Intake EPD

Braunvieh Association of America publishes multi-breed RFI efficiency EPD

SEGUIN, Texas – The Braunvieh Association of America (BAA) is among the first breed associations to release a multi-breed residual feed intake (RFI) expected progeny difference (EPD). The BAA is the first breed association to collaborate with GrowSafe Systems® to publish an RFI EPD derived from the GrowSafe network database.

"As an association, we are excited to introduce the RFI EPD as a tool to benefit our members and the beef industry," says Caleb Russell, BAA president. "Braunvieh is an inherently efficient breed, but this innovative EPD will allow our members to measure their cattle's efficiency and capitalize on it."

In recent years, feed efficiency has become a popular topic in the beef industry, but efficiency and RFI were top of mind for Braunvieh breeders more than a decade ago. In 2007, BAA initiated a National Bull Test program. As part of the program, the BAA Board of Directors decided to test only at locations with GrowSafe technology, which measures an individual animal's daily feed intake and compares it to daily weight gain in order to calculate RFI.

Before using GrowSafe technology, breeders could identify the animal that gained the most, but it was difficult to measure how much an individual animal ate. Using GrowSafe technology enabled Braunvieh breeders to measure individual-animal intake to establish its cutting-edge efficiency EPD.

"You can't see efficiency in cattle," says Mark Nelson, GrowSafe Systems North American director of seedstock sales and marketing. "When you test for and measure RFI, you know if they're gaining efficiently."

To date, BAA has RFI data on more than 1,000 Braunvieh animals tested at eight GrowSafe testing locations to drive its efficiency database. In addition, that data is part of a multi-breed database – the largest efficiency database in the world – that includes approximately 150,000 records, which drive the RFI EPD calculations.

"Volume of data across years of tests, across different test locations, across different breeds make this the most viable efficiency EPD that producers have to utilize in selecting for efficiency," Nelson says.

With an across-breed EPD, Braunvieh breeders are able to compare RFI for Braunvieh animals between test locations and years, but they can also see how efficient their animals are compared to other breeds in the database.

Producers who use the RFI EPD to select for efficiency can also achieve significant feed cost savings.

"Studies on RFI show that when you select for a lower RFI number on an animal, you can lower the feed cost through the lifetime of that animal," Nelson says. "If a producer selects for efficiency using the RFI efficiency EPD, that is the most valuable tool they have to move their herd forward."

For more information about BAA's industry-leading RFI EPD, contact Caleb Russell, BAA president, at (417) 793-6357 or crussellcbf@gmail.com.

About BAA

The Braunvieh Association of America works to promote the Braunvieh breed, while providing programs and services for its members. To learn more about BAA, visit www.Braunvieh.org.

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