



# NEWS

*For Immediate Release*

*August 30, 2007*

*Contact: Lori Maude  
Email: lorim@gelbvieh.org  
303/465-2333*

*This release is available electronically*

## *American Gelbvieh Association Releases Revamped Carcass EPDs*

With the release of the Fall 2007 Sire Summary and EPDs the American Gelbvieh Association (AGA) announces significant changes to the EPDs for carcass traits. A joint research project over the past 18 months between the AGA and Colorado State University's Dr. Mark Enns and Brian Brigham focused on development of Carcass EPDs from a constant fat endpoint.

"Feedlots routinely use a fat endpoint to determine harvest timeframes," states Wayne Vanderwert, AGA's Executive Director, "Providing tools that are consistent with industry practices seems to just make the most sense."

"To maximize efficiency, the beef industry needs to identify the genetics that fatten and deposit marbling readily and provide adequate carcass weight to drive profitability," Vanderwert continues.

In the past Gelbvieh, like other breeds, adjusted its carcass data for animal age. However, a majority of the data from the AGA's designed carcass tests comes from cowherds using heat synchronization and artificial insemination (A.I.). "That means that there is little age variation within a contemporary group," Vanderwert states.

Incorporated into the updated Carcass Weight, Ribeye Area and Marbling EPDs for the first time will be ultrasound records. "Gelbvieh breeders are incorporating collection of ultrasound data on bulls and heifers as part of their yearling performance dataset. This data, combined with carcass data collected through our Sire Nomination Carcass Program, provides our members with a more accurate set of tools to evaluate sires for use in their individual breeding programs," remarks Susan Willmon, AGA's Director of Breed Improvement. "Ultimately young sires will still need to have carcass progeny to get to the highest accuracy levels on these EPDs, but incorporating ultrasound should assist us in identifying young sires that demonstrate promise in the feedlot and on the rail."

One new EPD will be added to the carcass EPD line-up, Days to Finish (DtF) will replace the previous Fat Thickness EPD. With rising feed costs, animals that can reach the finish endpoint sooner translate into reduced feed costs and less total expense per animal. "We see this EPD being used in conjunction with the existing Carcass EPDs. If you identify two sires with comparable CW, REA and MB EPDs, but Sire A has a DtF EPD of 15 and the Sire B has an DtF EPD of 5 your net gain on Sire B's calves is 10 days of feed costs," explains Willmon. "This has potential to favorably impact the bottom line for a producer that retains ownership on a group of calves."

As part of the process to incorporate these new EPDs the AGA has also updated the Feedlot Merit and Grid Merit (now called Carcass Value) EPDs. “With the Feedlot Merit EPD we thought it was time to update the economic drivers within the index to reflect both the increased feed costs as well as the increased market value associated with feeder cattle,” says Willmon.

More significant changes were made within the Grid Merit EPD. “Our carcass dataset was robust enough at this time that we went back and looked at the profitability drivers at harvest,” explains Vanderwert.

The industry has consistently proven pounds as the primary carcass value driver, but the economic impact of the various premiums and discounts must also be considered. Because of this information, AGA reworked the Grid Merit EPD into the Carcass Value EPD to incorporate Carcass Weight, Yield Grade (YG) and Quality Grade (QG) premiums and discounts, as well as penalties for light and heavy carcasses.

“Our goal is to identify genetics within the Gelbvieh breed that will provide the pounds and muscle that translate into efficiencies in terms of average daily gain (ADG) in the feedlot as well consistent production of Yield Grade 1 and 2 carcasses,” emphasizes Vanderwert. “From there, we are working towards the Quality Grade component that will produce increased percent Choice carcasses when using Gelbvieh genetics in breeding schemes that result in either 50 percent Gelbvieh x 50 percent British breeds or 25 percent Gelbvieh x 75 percent British breeds. The final result being a profitable carcass end product.”

The Fall 2007 Sire Summary will be available on line at [www.gelbvieh.org](http://www.gelbvieh.org) by September 1, 2007. For more information please contact the American Gelbvieh Association at 303-465-2333.

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