

Virginia Cooperative Extension

A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University



Animal & Poultry Sciences (0306)

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Livestock Update

Beef - Horse - Poultry - Sheep - Swine

March 2010

This LIVESTOCK UPDATE contains timely subject matter on beef cattle, horses, poultry, sheep, swine, and related junior work. Use this material as you see fit for local newspapers, radio programs, newsletters, and for the formulation of recommendations.

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Scott P. Greiner, Extension Project Leader
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www.ext.vt.edu

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Dates to Remember

BEEF

MARCH

- 18 Beef Webinar. **Contact:** Mark McCann, (540) 231-9153, email: mmccnn@vt.edu
21 VA BCIA Southwest Bull Test Open House. Dublin. **Contact:** Scott Greiner, (540) 231-9159, email: sgreiner@vt.edu
27 VA BCIA Southwest Bull Test Sale. Wytheville. **Contact:** Scott Greiner, (540) 231-9159, email: sgreiner@vt.edu

APRIL

- 16-18 VA Beef Expo. Harrisonburg. **Contact:** Bill McKinnon, (540) 992-1009, email: bmckinnon@vacattlemen.org

MAY

- 21-22 Angus Boot Camp, Alphin Stuart Arena. **Contact:** McCann, (540) 231-9153, email: mmccnn@vt.edu

HORSE

MARCH

- 3 VA Forage & Grassland Council/VCE Winter Equine Conference. The Meadows Event Park. Doswell. **Contact:** Shea Porr, (540) 687-3521, ext. 27, email: cporr@vt.edu
4 VA Forage & Grassland Council/VCE Winter Equine Conference. Virginia Horse Center. Lexington. **Contact:** Shea Porr, (540) 687-3521, ext. 27, email: cporr@vt.edu
5 VA Forage & Grassland Council/VCE Winter Equine Conference. MARE Center. Middleburg. **Contact:** Shea Porr, (540) 687-3521, ext. 27, email: cporr@vt.edu

APRIL

- 9-11 State 4H/FFA Horse Judging and 4H Hippology, Horse Bowl and Presentations. Virginia Horse Center. Lexington. **Contact:** Celeste Crisman, (540) 231-9162, email: ccrisman@vt.edu

MAY

- 12-14 Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue Training. MARE Center. Middleburg. **Contact:** Shea Porr, (540) 687-3521, ext. 27, email: cporr@vt.edu
17-19 Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue Training. MARE Center. Middleburg. **Contact:** Shea Porr, (540) 687-3521, ext. 27, email: cporr@vt.edu

SHEEP

AUGUST

- 28 Virginia Performance Tested Ram Lamb Sale. Shenandoah Valley AREC. Steeles Tavern. **Contact:** Scott Greiner, (540) 231-9159, email: sgreiner@vt.edu

March Beef Management Calendar

Dr. Scott P. Greiner

Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

Spring Calving Herds

- Move pregnant heifers and early calving cows to calving area about 2 weeks before due date
- Continue calving
- Check cows 3 to 4 times per day, heifers more often – assist early if needed
- Keep calving area clean and well drained, move healthy pairs out to large pastures 3 days after calving
- Ear tag and dehorn all calves at birth; castrate male calves in commercial herds
- Give selenium and vitamin A & D injections to newborn calves
- Feed cows extra energy after calving; some protein may be needed also
- Keep high quality, high magnesium, high selenium minerals available
- Purchase estrous synchronization supplies; line up AI technician or AI supplies
- Order fertilizer; start getting equipment ready

Fall Calving Herds

- Pull bulls to maintain a 60-75 day calving season
- Remove bulls to bull pasture and check condition
- Begin creep feeding or creep grazing calves if desired
- Plan marketing strategy for calves
- Begin feeding high magnesium minerals to prevent grass tetany
- Make first selection of replacement heifers
- Order fertilizer; start getting equipment ready

Yearling Bull Management

Dr. Scott P. Greiner

Extension Animal Scientists, VA Tech

Winter and spring are the primary bull buying seasons in Virginia. A diligent amount of time spent studying performance information, EPD's, pedigrees and other pertinent information is warranted as sire selection is the most important tool for making genetic progress in the herd. Of equal importance is the care and management of the newly acquired bull. Proper management and nutrition are essential for the bull to perform satisfactorily during the breeding season. With most new herd sires in the state purchased as yearling bulls- management prior to, during, and after the first breeding season is particularly important.

Management Prior to the Breeding Season - Many newly purchased yearling bulls have recently completed a performance test, which provided a high plane of nutrition. Upon completion of this test, the energy level of the diet should gradually be reduced to prevent excessive fat deposition. The reduction in energy may be accomplished through restricting intake of high energy grain supplements, in conjunction with supplying a total diet lower in energy content (primarily forage). Young bulls should be managed to be a body condition score 6 at turn-out. This will give the bull adequate reserves of energy for use during the breeding season. Yearling bulls can be expected to lose 100 pounds or more during the course of the breeding season.

Acquiring a new yearling bull at least 60 to 90 prior to the breeding season is critical from several aspects. First, this leaves ample time for the new bull to get adjusted to the feed and environment of his new home, as well as an opportunity for several new bulls to be comingled for a period of time prior to turnout. Secondly, adequate exercise, in combination with a proper nutritional program, is essential to "harden" these bulls up prior to the breeding season. A facility for the newly acquired bull that allows for ample exercise will help create bulls that are physically fit for the breeding season. The nutrition of the bull will be dependent on body condition. Yearling bulls are still growing and developing and should be targeted to gain 2.0 to 2.5 pounds per day from a year of age through the breeding season. Bulls weighing approximately 1200 pounds will consume 25 to 30 pounds of dry matter per day. This intake may consist of high quality pasture plus 12 lbs corn, grass legume hay plus 12 lbs corn, or 80 lbs corn silage plus 2 lbs protein supplement. Provide adequate clean water, and a complete mineral free-choice.

Prior to the breeding season, all bulls should receive breeding soundness exams (BSE) to assure fertility. All bulls that are to be used should have a BSE annually. Because a variety of factors may affect bull fertility, it may be advisable to re-test young bulls before the breeding season even if it has only been a few months since their pre-sale BSE.

Management During the Breeding Season - The breeding season should be kept to a maximum of 60 days for young bulls. This will prevent over-use of the bull, severe weight loss and reduced libido. Severe weight loss may impair future growth and development of the young bull, and reduce his lifetime usefulness. When practical, supplementing young bulls with grain during the breeding season will reduce excessive weight loss.

In single-sire situations, young bulls can normally be expected to breed a number of females approximately equal to their age in months. Using this rule of thumb, a newly purchased bull that is 18 months of age could be placed with 18 cows or heifers. Bulls used together in multiple-sire breeding pastures should be of similar age and size. Young bulls cannot compete with older bulls in the same breeding pasture. A common practice is to rotate bulls among different breeding pastures every 21 to 28 days. This practice decreases the breeding pressure on a single bull. Some producers use older bulls early in the breeding season and then replace them with young bulls. The appropriate bull to female ratio will vary from one operation to the next based on bull age, condition, fertility, and libido, as well as size of the breeding pasture, available forage supply, length of the breeding season and number of bulls with a group of cows.

All bulls should be observed closely to monitor their breeding behavior and libido to ensure they are servicing and settling cows. Additionally, observe the cowherd to monitor their estrous cycles. Many females coming back into heat may be the result of an infertile or subfertile bull. All bulls should be monitored for injury or lameness that may compromise their breeding capability.

Management After the Breeding Season - Young bulls require a relatively high plane of nutrition following the breeding season to replenish body condition and meet demands for continued growth. Yearling bulls should be maintained in a separate lot from mature bulls, so these additional nutritional requirements can be provided. Body condition and projected mature size of the bull will determine his nutrient requirements during the 9 months following the breeding season. Bulls should be kept away from cows in an isolated facility or pasture after the breeding season. In the winter months, provide cover from extreme weather that may cause frostbite to the scrotum resulting in decreased fertility.

All herd bulls should receive breeding soundness exams (BSE) to assure fertility on an annual basis. Assess the bull battery well in advance of the breeding season, so that new herd sires can be acquired in a timely fashion.

Winter Hangover

Dr. Mark A. McCann

Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

All parts of the Commonwealth have experienced more winter weather (snow & cold) than we are accustomed to. The snowfall depth and persistent ground cover have provided challenges to both man and bovine in supplying and consuming winter feed.

As we optimistically look ahead to milder weather and spring calving be prepared to deal with and counter the impact of a winter hangover or the carryover effects of this past winter. The most visible impact of the winter would be the body condition score of cows (BCS). Cow BCS at calving is one of the tools that has been shown to be a better measurement of cow condition and reproductive performance than weight. Cows and heifers in thin body condition at calving time are slower to rebreed, produce less colostrum, and may not have sufficient nutrient reserves for maximum milk production.

Prolonged periods of cold weather in many areas has increased the amount of energy intake being directed toward maintenance and away from body reserves and fetal development. Table 1 contains the impact of hair coat on the lower critical temperature where a cow will need additional energy for maintenance. Table 2 displays the amount of additional hay or grain to make up the difference.

Table 1. Estimated Lower Critical Temperatures for Beef Cattle

Coat Description	Critical Temperature
Wet or summer coat	59 °F
Dry fall coat	45 °F
Dry winter coat	32 °F
Dry heavy winter coat	18 °F

Table 2. Effect of Temperature on Energy Needs ^a

Effective Temperature	% Increase in Energy	Amount of Extra Hay Needed	or	Extra Grain Needed
50 F	0	0		0
30 °F	0	0		0
10 °F	20	3.5 - 4		2 -2.5
-10 °F	40	7 - 8		4- 5

^a Assumes a dry winter coat, Marston et al (1998)

While the majority of this type of weather may be a memory, understanding these relationships should provide some explanation of your cow herd's current body condition as they exit winter and begin spring calving. The relationship between BCS and reproductive performance are well documented. The following table relates cow condition at calving to post-partum return to estrus and conception rate. While the majority of our spring calving cows are too far along to change

condition score, it clearly shows that nutrition will be critical to assuring a timely return to estrus and maintaining your current average calving date.

Table 3. Effect of Body Condition at Calving on Postpartum Interval and Conception Rate

Body Condition Score*	Postpartum Interval (days)	Conception Rate (%)
3.5-4.0	88.5	70
4.5	69.7	80
5.0	59.4	94
5.5-6.0	51.7	100
6.5	30.6	100

* Condition scores converted to 1-9 system. Houghton,P.L. et.al. 1990

Producers also need to be on their guard for other possible winter hangover effects in calving thin cows. Spring calving cows which receive inadequate nutrition and lose body condition during the winter months tend to produce less colostrum of lower quality which results in weaker calves that are more susceptible to disease. Additionally, cows calving in thin body condition are likely to produce lighter weight, weaker calves.

Bottom-line is that it has been a tough winter in Virginia; to avoid a disappointing spring calving season, evaluate the body condition of your cows and make the necessary nutritional adjustments. The BCS system is relatively easy to learn and can be implemented in any farm situation. The Virginia Cooperative Extension publication *Body Condition Scoring Beef Cows* can be picked up at your local Extension office or on the web (<http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/400/400-795/400-795.html#L4>).

Beef Webinar Focuses on Keys to a Successful Breeding Season- March 18th

Dr. Mark A. McCann
Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

Dr. Bill Beal, Professor, Dept. of Animal & Poultry Sciences, Virginia Tech will be the featured speaker for the Fourth Beef Webinar sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension and scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Thursday, March 18th. Dr. Beal is a reproductive physiologist who is nationally recognized for his research involving estrus synchronization, artificial insemination, embryo transfer (ET) and the use of ultrasound technology in beef cattle. He is also the recipient of several university and national teaching awards in recognition of his innovative and engaging education of undergraduate students.

Dr. Beal will be providing a discussion of "Keys to a Successful Breeding Season" with a focus on management producers can do that would improve their success for the upcoming spring breeding season. Participants in the on-line meeting will have the opportunity to ask questions through an on-line chat box or over the telephone using a number provided during the program. Check with your Extension Agent about accessing the program at your local office. Producers with high speed internet service can access the meeting at home. The web address to join the meeting is <http://connect.extension.iastate.edu/beefcattlewebinar/>. Alternatively, webinar information and meeting links are also available on the VT Beef Extension webpage <http://www.vtbeef.apsc.vt.edu/>. From the VT Beef Extension site, you can click on the meeting link and go directly to the meeting.

Recordings of the earlier webinars can be accessed through the VT Beef Extension page.

December webinar- *Winter Cow Nutrition*

January webinar- *Beef Industry Outlook*

February webinar- *Calving Management and Neonatal Calf Care*

If you have questions please contact Mark McCann at (540)231-9153 or mark.mccann@vt.edu.

Cattlemen's Boot Camp Comes to Blacksburg May 21-22

Dr. Mark A. McCann

Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

The American Angus Association in partnership with Virginia Tech and the Angus Foundation will offer a Cattlemen's Boot Camp at the Alphin-Stuart Arena on May 21-22, 2010. Cattlemen's Boot Camps provide cattle producers the ability to learn further about all segments of the ever-changing beef industry. These comprehensive educational programs address a wide range of beef cattle production topics ranging from conception to the carcass.

Topics covered in the May Boot Camp include:

- Business Approach to the Beef Industry
- Fundamentals of an Effective Herd Health Program
- Forage-based Cow Herd Nutrition
- Establishing Genetic Goals and Meeting Them
- Forage Walk
- Bull & Heifer Selection
- Identification Basics
- Cow Condition Scoring
- Strategies to Maximize Reproductive Efficiency
- Live Cattle Evaluation
- Management Factors Affecting Beef Carcass Quality
- Determining Carcass Value
- Meat Lab Exercises
- Carcass Evaluation & Grid Pricing
- Carcass Cut-out Value
- Sensory Analysis
- Producer Panel: *Value of Angus Genetics in Commercial Crossbreeding Programs*

Registration cost for the two day meeting is \$75 and includes program materials and meals. Registration information are available on-line at https://www.angusonline.org/event/bootcamp/Docs/VaTech_Reg_Form.pdf . If you have questions or need further information please contact Mark McCann (540/231-9153; mark.mccann@vt.edu).

Sire EPD Specifications for VQA- Spring 2010

Dr. Scott P. Greiner

Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

The Virginia Quality Assured Program recently completed its 13th season as a value-added marketing options for cow-calf producers. This added value is the result of several factors, including program standards for animal health, genetics, and best management practices. In 2009, in excess of 11,000 steers and heifers were marketed through the VQA program and producers realized a \$31 per head gross premium compared to similar cattle marketed the same time through graded sales.

VQA Purple Tag requirements include a yearling weight Expected Progeny Differences (EPD) specification for the sire of each calf. Minimum yearling weight EPD standards are breed-specific, and established based on the sire birth year to account for genetic improvement realized over time. This genetic standard provides assurance to buyers that the calves are sired by bulls that have favorable genetic potential for post-weaning growth performance. Post-weaning growth (ADG in feedyard) is an important determinant of feedyard cost of gain (cost to put on live weight or carcass weight) and profitability. Genetics of post-weaning growth is most effectively managed through sire selection using Yearling Weight EPD.

The following table provides the breed minimum yearling weight EPD requirements for bulls born in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 (applicable to yearling bulls purchased fall 2009 and spring 2010). Calves sired by bulls with yearling weight EPDs greater than or equal to the minimums published are eligible for the VQA purple tag. In the event a bull does not have a yearling weight EPD, weaning weight EPD is used as the specification. For specifications for older sires, visit the Virginia Tech Beef Extension and Education web site at <http://www.vtbeef.apsc.vt.edu/>, or contact your local Virginia Cooperative Extension office or the Virginia Cattlemen's Association.

**VQA Purple Tag
Sire Minimum Yearling Weight EPD Requirements
Bulls Born Fall 2008 & Spring 2009**

Breed (%)	Minimum YW EPD
Angus	+72
Braunvieh	+4
Charolais	+27
Gelbvieh (PB)	+73
Gelbvieh (Balancer)	+72
Hereford	+64
Limousin	+69
Red Angus	+54
Simmental (PB)	+53
Simmental (1/2)	+53

Jumping Through the Hoops: What It Takes to Make a BCIA Performance Tested Bull

Joi Saville

Extension Associate, Beef, VA Tech

I am sure that many of you out there have been reading the articles about the BCIA Central Bull Test Program and are wondering what makes these bulls so special. What exactly does it take for a bull to complete a performance test with BCIA and how do they make the sale? Will these bulls fit into my commercial program? Let's take a look at the requirements and the program and you will see that these bulls have gone through strict criteria just to sell at a BCIA Performance Tested Sale.

The purpose of the BCIA Performance Testing and Sales are to: provide a standard, impartial post-weaning gain test and development program that will furnish records which will be useful to the buyer and consignor in their breeding programs; provide a source of and market for performance tested bulls; provide quality genetics which address the demands of the industry; and to serve as an educational tool for beef cattle improvement and promotion.

The first step in making a BCIA bull is fitting that bull into a group of contemporary bulls from other breeders to which he can be developed with and evaluated against. This starts with the age of the bull. Culpeper Senior bulls are born from August 15 – November 30 of the previous year from the test. Southwest Senior bulls are born from September 15 through December 31 of the previous year. The Southwest Junior bulls are the youngest group with birthdates from January 1 through March 31 of the current test year. Depending on the birthdate, producers have two options of where to test the bulls. The Southwest Junior bulls are on test for 133 days versus 112 days for all the other tests. The Culpeper Senior bulls go on test in June or the beginning of July and finish their test by December.

Before the bulls are eligible to come into the testing program, they have to meet a minimum set of EPD requirements that are based on the Virginia Quality Assured (VQA) Feeder Cattle Program standards for bulls born in the fall of the previous year and spring of the current year. The test station requires a minimum yearling weight (YW) EPD based on the breed, however, if YW EPD's are not available, minimum Weaning Weight (WW) EPD's have to be met.

In addition to the EPD requirements, all bulls must have appropriate individual performance data on file with their respective breed association and performance records that reflect as such. Information required at entry are: actual birth weight, adjusted birth weight and ratio, adjusted 205 day weight and ratio, and minimum frame score of 5.0. All bulls are required to complete a post-weaning backgrounding program of at least 45 days prior to delivery and have to be bunk broke and adapted to feed.

At delivery, the bulls still have to meet certain requirements to come onto the test. All bulls have to be physically sound and exhibit a good disposition upon delivery. At delivery, consignors are required to present: health certificates; complete vaccination records; brucellosis and tuberculosis free test results if coming from a non-TB and Brucellosis free state; negative anaplasmosis test,

and a negative PI BVD test. Bulls are also encouraged to be tested for any genetic defects prior to delivery.

Upon delivery, bulls will be checked for reproductive soundness. In addition, delivery weights will be taken on the bulls and a minimum delivery weight per day of age has to be met. Bulls must exhibit growth of 2.5 pounds per day of age at delivery to be accepted.

Once all these requirements are met, the bulls are accepted for the testing and development period, however, this still does not make them fully eligible for the sale at the conclusion of the test. The bulls will be fed for a period of 112 days (133 for Southwest Junior Bulls) and individual performance records will be kept on all bulls during the test.

At the conclusion of the test, the bulls performance and records will be examined for eligibility into the Performance Tested Sale. Only the top 2/3 within each breed test group will be eligible for the sale. In addition to being one of the top 2/3 performing bull, each bull has to meet the following requirements:

- EPDs – all bulls have to meet the minimum breed YW EPD requirements based on the VQA Feeder Cattle Program standards. In the case in which a YW EPD does not exist, WW EPD will be used to determine eligibility. Official EPDs are requested via performance certificates issued by the breed associations approximately 14 days prior to off-test date.
- Individual Performance – Bulls must meet a minimum test Average Daily Gain (ADG) Ratio of 80; Minimum adjusted 365 day weight ratio of 90 and minimum frame score of 5.0 at off-test to be eligible for sale.
- Health – All bulls selling must have a negative TB, Brucellosis, and Anaplasmosis test within the 30 days prior to the sale. In addition, bulls may be held from the sale for other health reasons (such as excessive ringworm or external warts), upon the recommendation of the veterinarian.
- Genetic Defects – Angus and Angus-influenced bulls of other breeds (i.e. SimmAngus and Gelbvieh Balancers) must be genotyped free of any genetic defects which have been identified (i.e. Arthrogryposis Multiplex (AM) and Neuropathic Hydrocephaly (NH)) or be determined not at risk of being a carrier of the defect as determined by absence of the carrier ancestors in their pedigree. All bulls deemed carriers of the genetic defects are not eligible for the sale.
- Reproductive Soundness – Every bull must pass a breeding soundness evaluation off-test. The exam will include semen evaluation for Senior bulls, internal palpation, scrotal circumference measure and penile inspection with electro-ejaculator. Junior bull breeding soundness exams will not include semen evaluation. Minimum scrotal measurement will be 32 cm for bulls less than 15 months of age, and 33 cm for bulls 15 to 18 months of age. This is a 2 cm more stringent requirement than the Society for Theriogenology recommendations. Senior bulls will be given a minimum of two opportunities to pass the semen evaluation (off test and again pre-sale). To be classified as a Satisfactory Potential Breeder requires a satisfactory Physical Examination and minimum values for Scrotal Circumference, sperm Motility (>70%) and sperm Morphology (70%).

- Structural Soundness – A three-person committee will evaluate all bulls tested and may remove unsound or unsuitable bulls from the sale group (including feet and leg structure and soundness issues). The consulting veterinarian, in conjunction with the station management, may also withhold bulls from the sale with structure or other defects.
- Disposition – Bulls with undesirable disposition will not be sold. Test station management & Test & Sale Committees have the authority to eliminate such bulls at any time during the test.
- Registration – All bulls must be registered by a recognized beef breed association. Bulls not eligible for registry will not be allowed to sell. Registration numbers must be provided to the BCIA office no later than the 84-day weigh date for each test. Failure to do so may result in loss of sale eligibility.
- After bulls which fail to meet one or more of these requirements are eliminated from the sale, additional cuts to the sale offering (to achieve the top 2/3 goal) are made utilizing an index which combines individual performance (test ADG and YW) along with EPDs for calving ease, growth, and maternal traits.

Tim Sutphin, BCIA Southwest Bull Test Station manager and bull buyer, likes the rigorous process that the bulls have to go through to make it to the sale. “The bulls are evaluated in an un-biased manner and have to pass breeding soundness exams, structural soundness exams, as well as meeting minimum EPD’s for growth and test average daily gain,” explained Sutphin. “From there, only the top 2/3 of the bulls tested are available for sale.”

Sutphin feels that the BCIA Bull Test sales have always been a source of high quality genetics. As evaluation procedures and technology has advanced, Tim feels that there has become more similarity in the genetics of bulls offered through bull test stations, production sales, private treaty sales, and breed sales. However, the BCIA program remains unique in its ability to not only provide high quality genetics, but diversity in breeds, type and performance- all at one location.

Besides the stringent requirements for the BCIA bull test bulls to meet in order to sell, the BCIA bull consignors also stand behind their bulls. By signing a consignor agreement at the start of the bull test season, the consignor’s agree to certain responsibilities and expectations for both the consignor and BCIA regarding the development and marketing of bulls, breeding guarantee, and other items. The following guarantee is published in the sale catalog:

BULL GUARANTEE: All bulls sold are guaranteed, via written contract between BCIA and the seller, to be breeders. Guarantee will be applicable to bulls which prove to be infertile, have structural soundness problems (including foot soundness), or have other issues which apply under a good-faith guarantee. Any bull that settles a reasonable number of healthy cows shall be considered a breeder. This guarantee is contingent upon the buyer providing proper management prior to, during, and after the breeding season. Proper management shall include appropriate nutrition, breeding management (bull to female ratio appropriate for bull’s age, not commingling yearling bulls with mature bulls in same breeding pastures, proper observation of bulls during breeding season, etc.), and animal health care. If the bull proves to be a non-breeder, the seller shall be

entitled to provide the buyer one of the following: a) full refund for the purchase price, b) replace the bull with another of equal value, or c) issue credit to the buyer redeemable at a future BCIA bull sale.

“You can find a bull to fit any particular scenario, through the BCIA Bull Test Sales,” stated Sutphin. “From low birth weight bulls for heifers to terminal sires, to replacement heifer type bulls, BCIA has something for everyone.”

“I have had good luck with the bulls that I have purchased. They have always held up well and I have never had to go back to an owner for anything,” stated Sutphin. “You have to remember, if you go to a particular breeder’s farm, you have to pick from what he has got. It may not be what will work best for you and your herd, or even a high quality top end bull. You have those options at the BCIA Bull Test Sales, and they are all high quality bulls.”

“The Bull Test Sales provide a good value on high quality, carefully selected bulls. Without the cooperation between consignors, BCIA, myself, and the buyers, the quality of the BCIA Performance Tested Sales would not be able to remain such a viable point in the production chain,” concluded Sutphin.

The Southwest Bull Test Open House is scheduled for Sunday, March 21st from 1:00 until 4:00 PM at Hillwinds Farm. The Southwest Bull Test Sale is set for Saturday, March 27th in Wytheville, beginning at Noon. Please visit the BCIA website for more information on the bulls at www.bcia.apsc.vt.edu.

We hope to see all of you there.

**Edgewood Angus Named Virginia BCIA
2010 Outstanding Seedstock Producer of the Year**

Joi Saville, Extension Associate, Beef, VA Tech

Virginia BCIA is proud to present the 2010 Virginia Outstanding Seedstock Producer Award to Edgewood Angus, owned and operated by the Henderson family- Pete, Connie, and Peter Henderson of Williamsburg, Virginia.

Edgewood Angus consists of a 200-cow registered Angus herd which has been developed since the early 1980s from a commercial herd. Pete and his wife Connie, along with their son Peter and in conjunction with their daughters and Peter's wife have managed to make Edgewood a family affair. In 2000, the operation expanded from 75 to roughly 450 acres and moved the primary operation from Williamsburg to King William. Since that time, they have all worked very hard on improving pastures, fencing, and cattle management infrastructure.

Edgewood Angus has been consigning bulls to the BCIA test stations for over 14 years. During that time they have developed a strong reputation for quality genetics and have had several bulls top the BCIA tests and sales. Consistent, predictable genetics has been the focus which has been accomplished through the use of proven sires. Customer service is a high priority for Edgewood Angus, and they work diligently to assess the needs of their commercial bull buyers to design genetics that will do the job for them.

Edgewood has been awarded the Bartenslager Award and Premier Angus Breeder Award on two occasions from BCIA in 2007 and 2009. In December, Edgewood hosted their second annual on-farm performance tested Open House bull sale. Select females are offered through consignment sales.

Pete is the past president of BCIA, and is currently the chair of the Culpeper Test and Sale Committee. He is also very active with Virginia Angus and other beef and ag entities.

**2010 Virginia BCIA Superior Service Award
Presented to Rodney Leech**

Joi Saville, Extension Associate, Beef, VA Tech

Virginia BCIA is pleased to present the 2010 Superior Service Award to Rodney Leech. BCIA recognizes Leech for his commitment to cattle marketing and promotion in the Bath/Highland County area.

Rodney began work as an Agriculture Extension Agent in Highland County in 1984 after a short tenure teaching Agricultural Education at Highland County School. Since coming to Extension he has been actively involved with the growth of the Bath-Highland Cattlemen's Association by advising them and strengthening both their knowledge and marketing opportunities.

Rodney was instrumental in the success of the Bath-Highland board cattle sales that resulted in thousands of feeder cattle from the Western Highlands gaining access to improved load lot pricing and buyer visibility. He has supported the Virginia Quality Assured feeder cattle sales as well. Rodney recognized the need for improved marketing opportunities and genetic improvement of local feeder cattle for profitable feedlot performance. As a result he has assisted producers in marketing thousands of VQA cattle with the purple tag designation.

In addition, Rodney currently serves as Virginia Beef Quality Assurance Co-Coordinator. He has organized countless producer trips to bring them closer to cattle feeders for better understanding of what they need to do at home for maximum quality and profitability.

Finally, in the past few years, Rodney has actively been a part of the creation of the Highland Agriculture Center that recently acquired property, built a cattle handling facility and are currently marketing Highland cattle from that location. Rodney is well respected and considered a friend by many of the cattle producers locally and statewide that have worked with him.

For his dedication and leadership, Virginia BCIA is glad to present Rodney Leech with the Superior Service Award.

Virginia BCIA Presents Premier Angus Breeder Award

Joi Saville, Extension Associate, Beef, VA Tech

The Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association presented its Premier Breeder Awards at their Annual Meeting held in conjunction with the Virginia Beef Industry Convention on February 12, 2010. Breeders received the awards based on outstanding performance of their entire consignment at Virginia BCIA Central Bull Test Stations in the test year 2008-09. The Premier Angus Breeder Award was presented to Echo Ridge Farm, C.W. Pratt and family from Atkins, Virginia. Echo Ridge consigned a total of forty six bulls to the Virginia Central Bull Test program at both Culpeper and Southwest, earning the Breeder Group Award in three of the four test groups. Initiated in 1964 as an FFA project, the Echo Ridge Herd has evolved into one of the elite seedstock operations in the Commonwealth. The registered Angus operation consists of 225 cows managed both fall and spring calving seasons. The farm sells approximately 75 bulls per year primarily through the Virginia BCIA Performance Bull Test Program as well as on-farm private treaty sales.

Details of 2010 Virginia Ram Lamb Performance Test

Dr. Scott P. Greiner

Extension Animal Scientist, VA Tech

Nominations are currently being accepted for the 2010 Virginia Ram Lamb Performance Test to be conducted at the Virginia Sheep Evaluation Station located at the Shenandoah Valley Agriculture Research and Extension Center near Steeles Tavern. Rams will be delivered to the test station in early May, and after a two week adjustment period, will be performance tested for 63 days. In addition to measurement of growth performance, rams will be evaluated for carcass traits with ultrasound during the test, and DNA genotyping will be conducted for spider syndrome and scrapie resistance. Eligible rams will sell on August 28, 2010. Rams born September 1, 2009 to February 28, 2010 are eligible. For rules and regulations, as well as entry forms contact Scott Greiner at 540-231-9163.

Virginia Performance Ram Lamb Test 2007-2009 Test and Sale Expense Summary

	2009	2008	2007
<u>Test Costs</u>			
Feed	\$80.21	\$87.81	\$61.42
Yardage	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$8.00
Codon 171/Spider Genotyping	\$16.00	\$16.00	\$11.00
Vet/Medical	\$3.23	\$2.57	\$0.87
Misc.	\$4.45	\$3.85	\$3.30
Total Test Costs	\$111.89	\$118.23	\$84.59
<u>Sale Costs</u>			
Shearing	\$5.50	\$5.00	\$5.00
Sale advertising, auctioneer, mailings, etc.	\$5.34	\$4.84	\$9.23
Registration Transfer	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00
VA Check-off	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50
Total Sale Expenses	\$16.34	\$15.34	\$19.83
Average Sale Price	\$286.67	\$275.17	\$302.04
Total Test & Sale Expenses	\$128.23	\$133.57	\$104.42
Average Net to Consignor	\$158.44	\$141.60	\$197.62