

River View Veterinary Service Newsletter

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News and Upcoming Events:

- Are you BQA certified? If you need help, give us a call!

*Welcome to the River View Veterinary Service Newsletter,
designed to provide cattle producers with
timely information and education on a variety of topics.
Sarah Foust, DVM and Terry Foust, DVM*

Study Up Before Bull Buying

(Adapted from Wyatt Bechtel, Drovers February 2019)

Bull sale announcements and catalogs are coming in as the peak of bull sale season nears. Here are a few considerations to keep in mind before making the final decision on which bull to purchase:

1. **Set job goals.** Establish what you're looking for in a bull. Job goals for a bull start out simple with determining if they'll be breeding mature cows or replacement heifers. Next, you must decide if replacement females will be kept or if all of the cattle are going to a terminal market. How the calves are marketed will also play a role in the types of bulls and traits that are targeted.
2. **Consider how to buy genetics.** There are a few other methods [other than buying bulls from a traditional auction sale] that might offer better opportunities. Buying bulls via private treaty and sourcing bull power through artificial insemination (AI) are two alternative methods to consider. The cost of semen will have to be weighted with the extra labor and synchronization costs that come with breeding AI versus natural service.
3. **Know your values.** It's easier to sort through a catalog or sale sheet to find the right bull faster because index values offered by the various breed associations combine multiple traits found in EPDs. It is important to know what traits go into the index values.
4. **Finding the right fit.** After going through all the data, it's a good idea to get in the pen with some bulls and see how structurally fit they are. It is important to focus on the feet and legs. This ensures better longevity for the bull so they can do their job and breed cows. To aid in selecting structurally sound bulls, the American Angus Association has been working on a project to do hoof scoring and possibly bring the trait into EPDs. The trait is still in the research stage for EPDs among AI sires.