

Wulf Cattle offers a value added system

Wulf Cattle is one of the largest and most advanced integrated cattle operations in the country. Although known for their Limousin seedstock, Wulf is a diversified cattle company with an operation that encompasses everything from seedstock genetics to hanging carcasses. This includes: 1,250 Limousin, LimFlex and Angus seedstock cows; 1,400 commercial cows; 10,000 head of stockers; and 50,000 head finished per year.



According to Jerry Wulf, “We were cattle feeders before we became seedstock breeders, and we approach the business from a cattle feeder’s perspective.” This means producing value-added cattle from known genetics that will go on to produce heavy carcasses with high red meat yield and quality grade.

Casey Fanta is the seedstock manager, and explains, “We put a lot of emphasis on muscling, wanting to add muscle to our nation’s Angus based commercial herd without hurting quality grade.” He is quick to point out that although muscling is a priority, they strive to produce balanced cattle that are fertile, functional, feed efficient and have good dispositions.

This means collecting lots of data including the weight traits, cow productivity, disposition scores, Growsafe feed efficiency, ultrasound and genomics. Casey emphasizes, “We feel genomics are important, but that does not diminish the usefulness of the phenotypic data. In my opinion, if seedstock producers are not collecting all the phenotypic data, they are not doing their jobs.



Ultrasound plays an important part of this data collection process having ultrasounded all their bulls and heifers since the mid-1990s. Casey elaborates, “We have a great technician in Jeff Schoenfelder, who is from South Dakota, and use The CUP Lab® to interpret the images. We sell about 600 bulls a year, which come from our seedstock cows, extensive embryo transplant operation and dedicated cooperators, so collecting data is a big job. Jeff ultrasounds the bulls when we fertility test, which means one less time through the chute. The images are interpreted by The CUP Lab®, which we are very pleased with. They have great turnaround time, and we have had no problem with poor quality images or misidentification.”

Frank Padillia, Marketing Director of the North American Limousin Foundation, reiterates Wulf Cattle’s commitment to genetic improvement, “They have continually taken advantage of technologies such as ultrasound to select for traits that will pass more value along the supply chain. The genetic trend of the operation for carcass characteristics demonstrates increased marbling while continuing to possess ribeye area and dressing percentage.”

Wulf Cattle also puts their money where their mouth is, filling their feedlot mostly with customer cattle. Jerry explains, “We know we can net more profit margin on the calves out of our genetics. They are efficient, have high dressing percentages, and hang carcasses with great yield and quality grades. We specialize in value-added programs including GAP and Natural certified cattle for the domestic market as well as NHTC for export to Europe. GAP is a USDA Processed Verified program that certifies the cattle have been humanely raised, which is required by certain stores like Whole Foods. Currently, we are the biggest supplier of value-added cattle to Tyson, and we plan on growing.”

Casey sums it up, “We are integrated and growing, but it all starts with our genetics. This means collecting all the data including ultrasound to identify outstanding genetics to mass produce.” However, both Casey and Jerry warn about getting lost in individual data, but instead letting it all feed into the EPDs and relying on them to sort the cattle.

Wulf Cattle is an operation on the move. When you buy their bulls you have the opportunity to buy into a whole forward thinking system that strives to maximize the value of cattle in all segments of the industry.